Week ending August 13 1949 Every Thursday Threepence

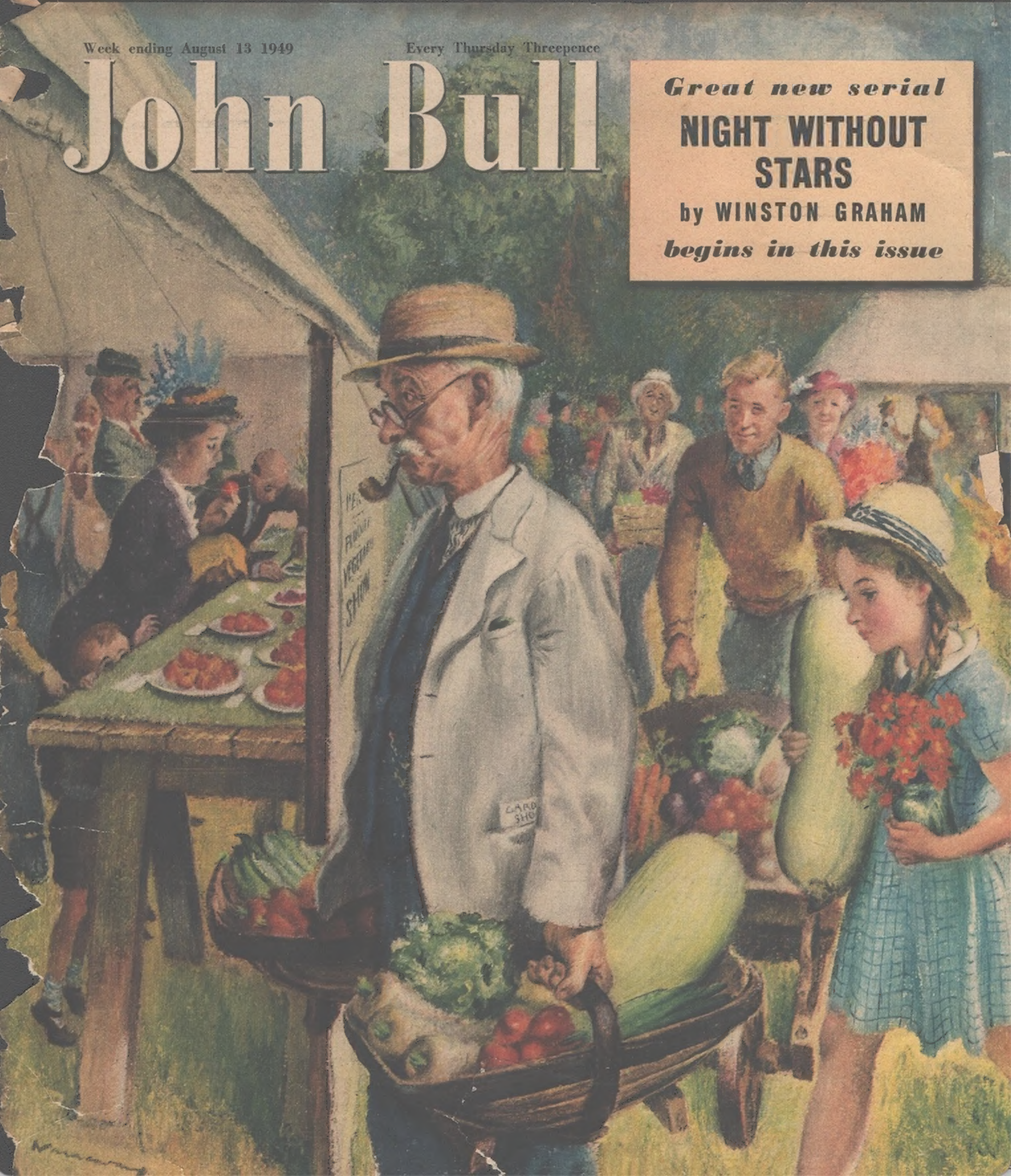
John Bull

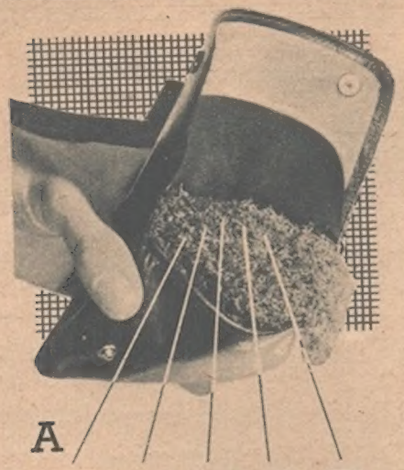
Great new serial

NIGHT WITHOUT STARS

by WINSTON GRAHAM

begins in this issue





A

RIZLA

Cigarette Machine Filter Tips and Paper

COMPLETE THE JOB!

END DRY SCALP — and what a difference!

QUITE a difference between these two pictures! On the left, you see how Dry Scalp can ruin your hair. Takes all the life and gloss out of it. Makes it unruly. It won't stay in place. Loose dandruff shows, especially at the parting and on your coat collar.

Hey presto! What a change (*see right*), when you end Dry Scalp with 'Vaseline' Brand Hair Tonic! The hair has a natural, healthy gloss, always looks well-dressed. Dandruff disappears! A few drops of this famous tonic dressing gently massaged into your scalp soon stimulates the flow of natural oils, ends Dry Scalp. When massaging, move the whole scalp—don't just rub. Your hair will look well-dressed the whole day through.

Vaseline TRADE MARK HAIR TONIC

The Dressing that ends Dry Scalp

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Stupendous value

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And See How **Beautifully They Write!**

In gay Plastic Colours with Blue Ink. Refills 1/1 in Red & Green Ink as well as Blue. At all Stationers. Scrib L^td Ldn. S.W.19

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All foods, food products, toilet preparations, medicines and drugs and other articles which have been approved by our experts are marked → In the case of medicines and drugs we guarantee that if they are taken or applied according to the directions they will have no injurious effects.

Naturally this guarantee applies only to manufactured articles, but every care is taken to satisfy ourselves as to the bona-fides of all advertisements in "John Bull." Any complaint must reach us within one month from the appearance of the advertisement in "John Bull," and in the case of dispute the decision of our Managing Director shall be final.

ODHAMS PRESS LIMITED, Proprietors of "John Bull."

Your Choice Jam

Made by BATGERS

INDIGESTION

... cause and remedy

The food you eat may be divided into three classes, carbohydrates, proteins and roughage. Carbohydrates, such as bread and potatoes, form the bulk of our food and should be very thoroughly masticated, because the juices necessary for their digestion are contained in the saliva with which these foods should be well mixed before being swallowed. The reason you should not drink with meals is that any fluid taken with meals reduces the strength of the digestive power of the saliva. The digestive juices for carbohydrates must be alkaline, that is why Moorland Indigestion Tablets which are alkaline, slowly dissolved in the mouth help to digest bread, pastry and potatoes before they reach the stomach. Moorland Indigestion Tablets, are famous the world over for relieving indigestion, heartburn, acidity and all stomach troubles. Take two Moorland Tablets after meals and eat what you like and enjoy it. Sold by all chemists, 1/8d., also in 10d. packets (including tax).

Afraid to nap on Sunday afternoons?

Says Grandpa Kruschen
'THERE'S NO NEED TO SUFFER'

You probably know too well the sudden grip of sciatica after forty comfortable winks in your chair on Sunday afternoon.

Sciatica does not have to come with increasing years. One of the most common causes can be impurities that collect in the system. If your blood-stream is kept free of these, you can often be freed from sciatica. Kruschen can do it.

Kruschen is no ordinary laxative. It is six specially blended salts, each is designed to help nature expel the impurities through the natural channels. And the little daily dose of Kruschen prevents these poisons forming again. Why not enjoy the Kruschen freedom from pain.

Kruschen costs 1/4 and 2/4 (Crystals or Powder) at Chemists and Grocers. The 2/4 size will last you twice as long. You will find the new Kruschen Powder so easy to take.

Thousands thank KRUSCHEN

NEW IMPROVED CREAM DEODORANT

safely STOPS underarm PERSPIRATION

1. Does not irritate skin.
2. Does not rot dresses or men's shirts.
3. Prevents odour. Safely stops perspiration for 1 to 3 days.
4. Pure, white, greaseless, vanishing.
5. No waiting to dry. Can be used right after shaving.

Arrid 2/5 a jar

Supplies are rather better now, and you've a good chance of being able to get Arrid from your chemist, hairdresser, or local store. You'll find the new improved Arrid has been worth waiting for.

EDITORIAL

Make British goods more beautiful

THERE IS ONE CERTAIN WAY in which we can sell more British goods abroad in spite of the buyers' market which has made the customers more choosy.

That is by making our goods more *beautiful*.

A beautiful export sells quicker—and has a greater choice of buyers—than a drab one, a vulgar one, or an ugly one. This should be so obvious as scarcely to need saying. Yet it is apparently not generally understood by British manufacturers, for there are still far too many dull, shoddy or unlovely things among the commodities we send abroad.

Quality has always been our pride. *Good* materials and *good* craftsmanship combine to make a *good* workmanlike article recognized as typically British the world over.

But our best friends abroad would hardly assert that they instinctively look to Britain for the highest standards of design and colour.

We have always been conservative about the colours and designs of the things we use in daily life, from napkin rings to motor cars. And some of our manufacturers who have previously studied the home market first have become even more conservative than the public. Too many still think that design can be left to engineers, foremen or even office boys!

Now that their main job is to sell goods abroad, that sort of lazy conservatism will have to be scrapped. For one of its worst results is not merely dull design, but downright bad design.

The worst examples spring from attempts by unskilled people with no natural taste to "pretty up" things produced by modern processes—such as plastics and metal goods—by adding superfluous ornament.

There is no harm in ornament, as such, whatever the pretentious "functionalists" may say. But there is great harm in vulgar, meaningless decorations stuck on at random or to fill up a blank space.

FOR that sort of ugliness there is a slang word among designers—"borax."

"Borax" is strips and twirls of chromium in unnecessary places on a car or—commoner still—on a motor coach. "Borax" is all forms of bogus streamlining. "Borax" is ugly triangles and semicircles on the corner of a plain rug.. "Borax" is "fancy" patches of paint or inlay spoiling the clean woodwork of a cupboard.

"Borax," in short, is the modern counterpart of the elaborate dust-collecting decoration with which our Victorian grandparents smothered their goods and furniture.

"Borax" is vulgar. "Borax" is supposed to be ornament, but is really disfigurement, and it is as different from real and tasteful decoration as a cardboard mask is from a handsome human face.

We cannot afford to send "borax" abroad, where it will infallibly lower foreigners' respect for British taste and industrial competence.

Our best designers do not produce "borax." A visit to the studio of a first-rate industrial designer is an eye-opener! It would make the most heedless person realize how much brighter, more beautiful and more efficient our homes could be if all manufacturers employed good artist-craftsmen.

Many industries have indeed vastly improved the beauty of their products. British wallpapers, once hideous by Continental standards, are now being produced by our leading firms in clean, fresh colours and clever designs suited to small modern houses.

Even the linoleum industry, once the most backward of all in design and colour, is improving.

BUT it still needs to discard quite a lot of "borax."

British textile design jumped ahead before the war. Those firms which employ gifted artists to make their patterns are still doing well. Others, judging by cloth shown at recent exhibitions abroad, still think that the muddy colours and feeble designs of fifty years ago are good enough to sell to a world whose taste has moved on. They are wrong—and they will be disastrously wrong unless they remember that appearance is just as important as wearing quality.

Another industry which should improve its standard of design is the pottery trade. Britain makes the world's best china—but in shapes and colours it too often lacks charm compared with the china of France, Italy and even Germany.

It is the same with glassware. We remember how, before the war, Czechoslovak glass captured the British market, not only because it was cheap, but because of its excellent designs.

Even the flimsy trifles from Japan which then flooded our cheaper shops—parasols, toys and knick-knacks—sold in huge quantities because of their genuine prettiness, which satisfied a craving for colour and charm seldom gratified by our own manufacturers.

That craving is stronger than ever in the harsh world of today, overshadowed by austerities and anxieties. We must do our best to meet it.

JOHN BULL 189 HIGH HOLBORN LONDON W.C.1

AUGUST 13, 1949 VOLUME 86 NUMBER 2250 PHONE: TEMPLE BAR 2468 GRAMS: HEROICALLY, WESTCENT, LONDON

TO THOSE

WHO TAKE ASPIRIN

In the past five months some five thousand doctors have been told about the new aspirin, called Disprin. Their reception of Disprin leaves no room for doubt about medical preference for an aspirin that is neutral (non-acid) and soluble.

Aspirin is acid (*acetylsalicylic acid*) and almost insoluble in water. Aspirin enters the stomach in the form of undissolved acid particles, which, in susceptible cases, may produce gastric irritation resulting in heartburn or dyspepsia. Disprin, on the other hand, forms a neutral (*non-acid*) palatable solution. Because it is non-acid, it does not irritate the stomach lining. Because it dissolves completely, it is more rapidly absorbed and is therefore quick to give relief. Your doctor knows how important these things are. *Bottle of 26 tablets 2/-*

From all chemists

DISPRIN REGD to relieve pain

NEUTRAL: NON-ACID • NON-IRRITANT

SOLUBLE • RAPID IN RELIEF • PALATABLE

RECKITT & COLMAN LTD., HULL AND LONDON. (PHARMACEUTICAL DEPT., HULL)

just right..

. . for craftsmanship, for sensible comfort and smart appearance. Men find them all at a reasonable price in John White shoes. Tied to every pair is the John White Guarantee—the sign which means *just right*. Look for it in the windows of appointed Retailers.

46/6 *Model 5013. Also in Tan.*

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write for latest illustrated folder of the John White style range and name of nearest appointed Retailer to: John White Footwear Ltd., Dept. B.G., Higham Ferrers, Northamptonshire.

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By Appointment
Biscuit Manufacturers to H.M. King George VI
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the first name you think of in

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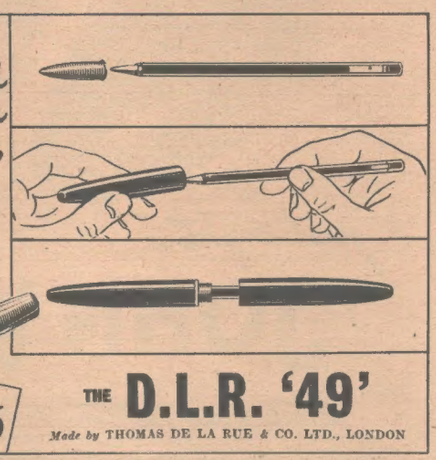
This is the DELO - a wonderful ball-pointed pen costing 2/6 - it's a complete unit in itself, but see how it can (for a further 10/-) be converted into a full-size, wonderfully designed luxury pen!



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THE D.L.R. '49'

Made by THOMAS DE LA RUE & CO. LTD., LONDON

Free Speech

HUSBANDS WHO RUN AWAY

ANNE BLYTHE'S ARTICLE "So easy to desert a wife" (JOHN BULL, July 23) may make people realize that there is nothing amusing about being deserted. My husband left me nearly four years ago. At first I was hurt and bewildered and tried to get maintenance. When I failed to trace him I took a domestic job where I could have my little boy with me.

Now we are both in a good home.

But, if only divorce was easier and cheaper, I should feel much happier completely free.—MRS. D. RICHARDS, Dorset.

. . . It is an amazing thing that men can disappear and leave their responsibilities. If a man commits a petty theft the police are tireless in chasing him. Surely it is a greater offence to leave a family.

I have not seen my husband for nearly four years. At first I received money from him at intervals, but eventually this ceased altogether and I have had to struggle to keep my three children.—MRS. E. W., Devon.

. . . Anne Blythe presented a one-sided case. Thousands of husbands have been forced to "desert" their wives by nagging, coldness or infidelity. I am one of them. Though I am condemned to years of paying maintainance and years of loneliness I would rather suffer this than return.—H. B., South Shields, Co. Durham.

Left-handers

RECENTLY, I HAD TO get signatures from a large group of workpeople. I found that one-tenth of them signed with their left hands. A generation ago it was an unusual thing to come across a person who wrote with his left hand. Why the change? — P. HERBERT, 32 Uplands Avenue, Clayton Heights, Bradford.

Up-in-the-air Cure

THE PICTURE ILLUSTRATING the article "Business that's up in the air" (JOHN BULL, July 23) shows a child about to take off for a flight in a "whooping-cough special."

To the best of my knowledge my two children, John and Margaret, were the first anywhere to undertake a high-altitude flight to cure whooping cough. This was on February 26, 1939. And the reasoning that led up to the flight was entirely my own, without any advice from medical or other sources.

I was working as a ground engineer in a shadow aircraft factory. I had acquired some knowledge of the causes of whooping cough. I was thinking of cures and I thought that, if sanatoria situated at high altitudes and designed for a long stay were beneficial for permanent or semi-permanent afflictions such as tuberculosis, why not a temporary flight for a temporary affliction like whooping cough?

I was squeezed into the passenger's seat of one of the Liverpool Aero Club's Leopard Moth aircraft with John on my right knee and Margaret on my left. They were both asleep. We climbed through small cloud to 10,000 feet.

It was a clear sparkling day, ideal for the purpose, and I asked the pilot to open the ventilators. Keeping them open, he went up to 15,000 feet, when both children woke up and coughed. Then they drew deep breaths and fell asleep again.

At the end of a week, all bronchial symptoms in both children had disappeared and, except for weakness, all effects of whooping cough had gone. The spasmodic cough vanished from the time they woke up and coughed at 15,000 feet. —JOHN GIBSON, 48 Lyme Grove, Longview, Huyton, Liverpool.

Cost Of An Apple

I SEND FIRST-CLASS cooking apples to market which fetch a halfpenny a pound. They pass through five or six hands, each middleman taking his percentage, until the consumer pays eightpence a pound.

When I spend ten years caring for apple trees and bringing them to maturity, is it reasonable that the reward to me should be a mere halfpenny a pound, while the middlemen take sevenpence-halfpenny?

Distribution combines have attained a position out of all proportion to the work they perform. We need a commission to inquire into this—and a controlled minimum price for every article produced.—C. HATTON, Croft Orchard, Callow End, Worcester.

Oil For The Sting

LINSEED OIL RUBBED on to wasp stings is a cure I have often found to work when all else has failed. Children stung in the mouth can be safely treated in this way.—ROBERT G. SILLS, Oak Leaves, Frittenden, Kent.

The Real America

ELKAN ALLAN'S ARTICLES in JOHN BULL on "The Real America" give only an onlooker's impression of the Southern States. I was born in Mississippi and lived there for thirty-five years. I was the daughter of a poor white farmer. For eight years of my early life my father was a share-cropper.

Yes, a colour bar does exist there, but are men slaves—which is what Allan implies—when they can own their own houses, farms, shops, cars? I grew up among the poor, both black and white. But I had a better education than my daughter is likely to get here in Britain. And I had Negro friends whose education was as good as mine.

Allan said that a hovel with no windows and with an outside stove for cooking was the regular pattern of homes in the South. I never saw one.—MRS. J. LAY, 14 The Banks, Lyneham, Chippenham, Wilts.

. . . I was one of the G.I. brides who returned home—but not because I didn't like America. I thought it wonderful. While I was there I worked in a film studio and in the office of a large factory. Everyone was more than kind and total strangers went out of their way to make me feel at home. I hope one day to see that beautiful country again.—MRS. R., Glasgow.

John Bull welcomes readers' views, experiences and ideas for publication. A guinea is paid for every letter used. Mark the envelope "Free Speech" and make sure your full name and address is in the letter

now for FRUIT & SALAD dishes

A good health habit you can thoroughly enjoy is to have some salad and fruit *every* day. So while salad ingredients and fruits are plentiful, make the most of your opportunities! Here are some new recipes to add to your old favourites. Each recipe has been kitchen tested and serves four.

Main Dish Salad

FISH MAYONNAISE. *1 lb. cooked fish or canned fish, 1 oz. margarine, 1 oz. flour, ½ pint milk, 1 level teaspoon mustard, 2 level teaspoons sugar, 1 level teaspoon salt, ¼ level teaspoon pepper, 3-4 tablespoons vinegar (preferably white), shredded lettuce leaves, ½ pint cooked peas, 4 tomatoes, a little chopped cucumber.*

Make a sauce with the margarine, flour and milk. Add mustard, sugar, salt and pepper to the vinegar and mix well. Pour into the sauce, mix well. Allow to cool. Arrange the flaked fish on a bed of shredded lettuce leaves, border with peas and tomatoes. Pour the sauce over the fish to cover it and sprinkle with the chopped cucumber.

Fruit Salad with a difference

2-3 oranges, peeled and sliced, 1 apple peeled and thinly sliced, 8 plums cut and stoned, a few grapes or other small fruit available, and ½ can orange juice.

Mix the prepared fruits and cover with the canned orange juice.

Sour-Sweet Salad

Delicious served with sandwiches, cheese, cold meat, pastry. *½ level teaspoon mustard, ½ level teaspoon salt, pinch of pepper, 1 level teaspoon sugar, 2 tablespoons top of milk, 1 tablespoon vinegar, ½ cabbage heart, finely shredded, 2 oranges, peeled and finely cut, 1 grated apple (optional).* Mix the seasoning and sugar together and gradually stir in the milk. When smooth add the vinegar and mix well. Mix the cabbage, orange and apple with the dressing and serve in a salad bowl garnished with cucumber or tomatoes.

Fruit Juice Jelly Whip

The canned orange and grapefruit juices now in the shops are not only delicious and healthful as drinks, but—plain or diluted with water—make lovely jellies. Here's one suggestion. *½ oz. gelatine, ¼ pint water, ½ can of orange or grapefruit juice.* Dissolve the gelatine in the water and allow to cool. Add the fruit juice and when almost set, beat with a whisk until very frothy. Then turn into a wetted mould or glass bowl. (For children, you may like to add a level tablespoon of sugar or syrup, which should be dissolved with the gelatine.)

ISSUED BY THE MINISTRY OF FOOD (S226)

Mars are more marvellous now

NOW every Mars bar is coated with thick, rich, MILKY chocolate

NOW Mars caramel layer is thicker, has a new buttery flavour

NOW the chocolate malted-milk centre is lightning-whipped in white of egg

–and marvellous value too!

MARS LTD., SLOUGH, BUCKS

Today's Mars is the *more* marvellous Mars — improved and enriched in three thrilling ways. There's rich, *milky* chocolate, thicker caramel, and a centre whipped in white of egg. Eat one slowly and taste the delicious blend of flavours that has made Mars the biggest-selling chocolate bar in Britain.

HOW LOVELY! Soon we won't have to accept any substitute for

extra-soapy SUNLIGHT

Yes, ladies, there's going to be more Sunlight in the shops! If you make a point of asking for it *now* it will help your shopkeeper to see you get it regularly in the future. So be sure you ask for your favourite Sunlight Soap that's so pure, so cleansing, so safe for everything you wash.

S 1257-1014 A *LEVER* PRODUCT

S.R. keeps teeth safe as well as white by keeping gums healthy. That's because it contains sodium ricinoleate which many dentists themselves use. S.R. penetrates the gums and stimulates resistance to disease. See your dentist twice a year and use S.R. twice a day. *1/4 and 2/- inc. tax.*

for sparkling teeth in healthy gums

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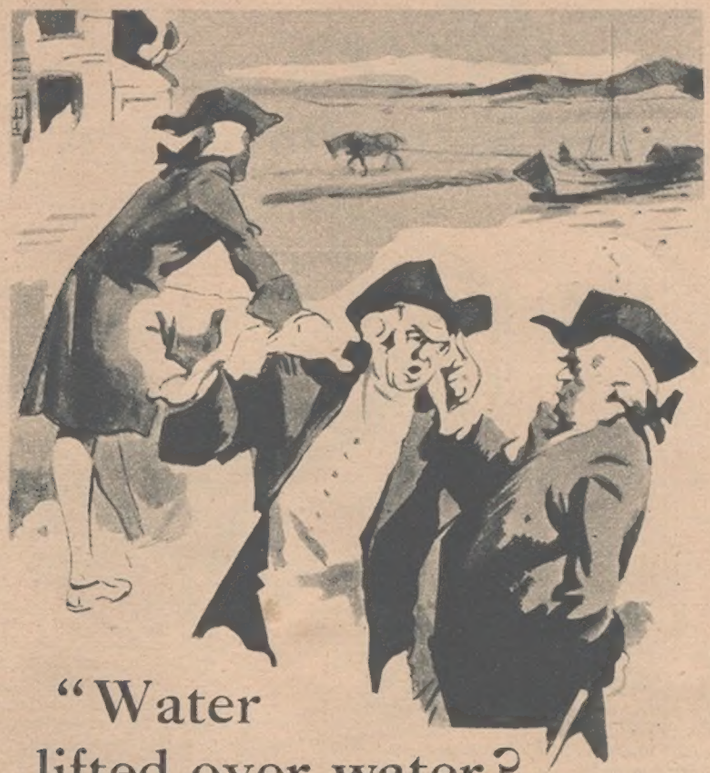


"Water lifted over water? Insane!" *they said*

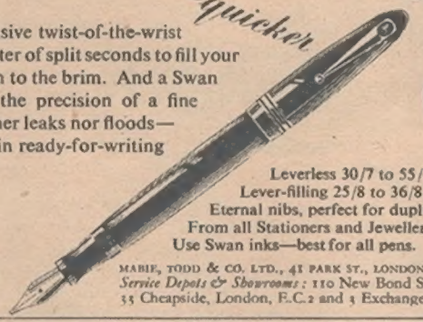
IN THE YEAR 1760, men doubted James Brindley's sanity. In his construction of the Worsley Canal, near Manchester, this engineer proposed to build an aqueduct nearly fifty feet above the River Irwell—thus performing the feat, at that time thought impossible, of "lifting water over water". Within a year he had carried his canal across the river; it was known at the time as "the eighth wonder of the world".

The determination of men like Brindley is playing its part in modern Britain, in the development of our electrical resources. "Impossible" feats are being performed to give the nation enough electricity for its expanding industries. For the general public, restrictions on the use of electricity during "off-peak" hours are already being lifted; and, as electricity becomes more plentiful, new methods of application will bring ever greater comfort and convenience to British families.

The Electrical Development Association continually studies and promotes new methods of increasing industrial production by the skilled application of electricity. Call at your Electricity Service Centre, or write E.D.A., 2, Savoy Hill, London, W.C.2.

Swans fill fuller—quicker

With the exclusive twist-of-the-wrist filler, it's a matter of split seconds to fill your Leverless Swan to the brim. And a Swan is made with the precision of a fine watch. It neither leaks nor floods—and is always in ready-for-writing condition.



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Lever-filling 25/8 to 36/8 including tax.
Eternal nibs, perfect for duplicating, extra.
From all Stationers and Jewellers.
Use Swan inks—best for all pens.

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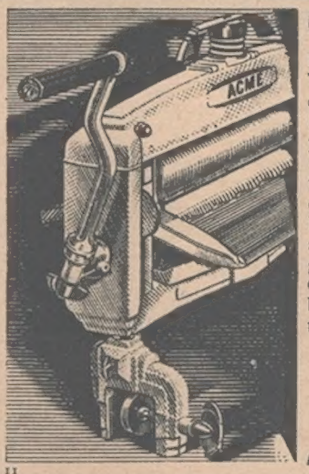

11

CAREFUL, PLEASE!

Be careful when you buy a wringer. Today many in the shops are newcomers, and you've no means of knowing the results they give. But, you can be *sure* of ACME! Acme is the only cleanser-wringer and furthermore there's seventy years of solid manufacturing experience behind each Acme. The Acme name, alone, is your guarantee that you're getting the finest machine made. Over four million Acmes have been sold already—proof enough that ACME gives the best results.

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ACME WRINGERS LTD. DAVID ST. GLASGOW S.E.

THE BED-TIME SWEET

FOX'S Glacier MINTS

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SOOTHING · SUSTAINING · DIGESTIVE

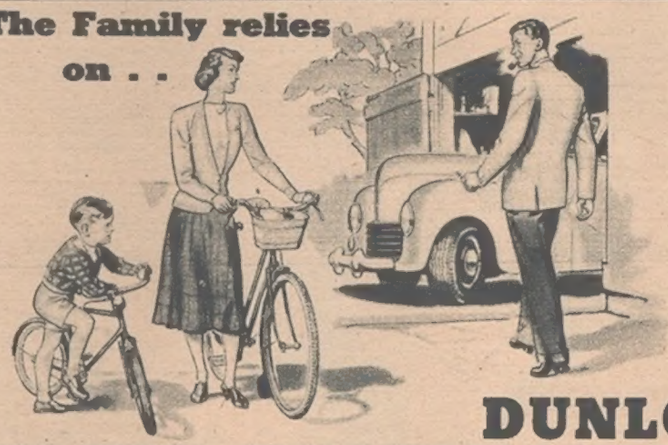
Feel the Relief that 'ASPRO' brings!

Heatwaves are not over-common in our British summer—yet when they come they cause unnecessary distress to thousands. People complain of nerviness, irritability, sleeplessness and heat fatigue. **Put these symptoms to flight straight away by taking a couple of 'ASPRO' tablets,** preferably with a summer drink or a cup of tea. **The action of 'ASPRO' is safe and swift:** within a few minutes you experience a feeling of relief and well-being; you are able to enjoy the glories of summer again.

DON'T LET HOT WEATHER VEX YOU!
'ASPRO' DISPELS—Summer Chills, Rheumatic Twinges Nerviness, Sunglare Headaches, Hot Weather Discomfort

Prices: 4D. 7½D. 1/5 Made by ASPRO LIMITED, Slough, Bucks ASPRO

The Family relies on . .



DUNLOP

CAR TYRES, CYCLE TYRES & SADDLES

9H/129

BEGINNING A GRIPPING NEW SERIAL by WINSTON GRAHAM

Night without stars

WHEN THE SHELL blinded me they sent me back to a base hospital for some weeks while they grafted skin on my hand. Every now and then a surgeon would come by and look at my eyes and say, "Well, it's too early yet to be sure," and the nurses would say how lucky I was not to be disfigured.

Blindness takes getting used to, particularly in the mornings: at night you go to sleep and accept darkness as natural; it's the mornings that are the trying time, when you wake and want to lift something off; pull the curtains, so to speak.

And in the night sometimes when you try to look at your luminous wrist-watch. Once you're properly awake your mind can take control and argue things out. Seeing isn't everything. There's likewise a wind on the heath. . . .

After a month or so they began to talk about an operation and shipped me back to England. Rachel came over to see me almost at once, but it was all rather stiff and formal and never got down to anything. It was bad knowing she was sitting beside me and not seeing her face or her hair or her eyes or what she was dressed in. I'd been thinking a good deal about Rachel, having had plenty of time for thought.

But it somehow wasn't right plunging in at that first meeting for over six months; and the next time she had her mother with her, and the time after that was just before the operation, and it seemed inappropriate to talk about the future when everyone was so hopeful and trying to sell me the idea that in a few weeks I should be as good as ever.

Once or twice I wondered if this was the tin hare designed to get the dog to run.

They did things to my left eye, this being the less damaged, and it was a success. At least, it was a success so far as it went. I'd been able to get a few glimpses out of this eye when allowed to for the last week or so, and when they took the bandages off I could make out things fairly clearly again. Admitted it

---

She said: "Do you want to be left alone? You have only to say." I said: "I think I do." Suddenly, she said: "You're blind, aren't you?"

I needed time to think. With blindness coming on there seemed nothing to live for. And then Alix came along.

still wasn't much of a view, but small change is riches to a beggar.

They said something about blood in the eye and inflammation and that these would clear up as time went on. It was a question of patience and good behaviour now. I wasn't so sure.

Anyway, I'd had leisure to think things over thoroughly before Rachel came this time, and I was glad to see that she was alone. Yes, see. I saw her blurred and misty and grey, like one of those tactful screen close-ups done to disguise the fact that the heroine is long in the tooth.

But Rachel was twenty, and I knew her colour from memory.

"Is it—really all right, Giles?"

"It's all right."

". . . Sure?"

"You've got a new hat on, and you're doing your hair differently—and *where* did you get that brooch?"

"Well . . . thank *Heaven*. . . . When did they take the bandages off?"

"Yesterday."

She said doubtfully, "How good is it?"

"Pretty good."

"It doesn't look much different."

"It is different, believe me."

She sat down abruptly. "I've had nightmares. To think of you, so active and vigorous . . . groping your way through life—twenty years, forty years. We can talk of it now."

I COULD still see myself doing a certain amount of groping, but I thought I'd save that bright thought until after tea.

Nurse Rylands, who was a stone heavier and a foot taller than I'd imagined, pushed over a trolley, and after a few minutes we were alone again. It was then that I began to notice the differences in Rachel were not only in her voice. She talked, as she'd talked before on these visits, a bit feverishly, and now that I could see and she might have expected me to be watching her she seemed to want to avoid my gaze. I'd already assured myself that the nurses in Normandy had been telling the truth and that I was no worse to look at than usual.

I listened to Rachel, but didn't say much. I knew it was time I started talking, because the longer it was left the worse it would get.

But I'm not the stuff heroes are made of, and there was the awful temptation to let things slide.

I knew there'd be an argument, because she was that sort. She'd want to stick by the contract, and it's hard arguing against your own interests. Anyway, if I wanted to be even moderately honest I had to make it clear to her that I wasn't going to be in good shape for getting married just yet. It seemed to me the field was wide open.

If—in a month or six months or twelve months—I found I could see as well as ever I'd claim all the privileges going, but until then she must be free. The present state wasn't good enough. You can't earn your living and do any good with a wife and family on about a quarter of an eye.

Presently I lit her cigarette and one for myself, and carefully noticed that the flame which should have been amber was a sort of delicate mauve.

"I don't know what these damned surgeons have done," I said, "but they've taken the Technicolor out of life. I shall probably do pretty well as a solicitor now—seeing everything in field grey. No danger of glamour distorting the judgment."

"Shall you—go back to that? I mean, you're still a partner, aren't you?"

"Yes. I expect I shall go back."

"You should take a long holiday first. It would be crazy to plunge straight back into it."

"Maybe. It depends."

There was a short silence.

"You'll go on wearing glasses, I suppose?"

"If they help. D'you mind?"

"Of course not."

There was another pause. This was obviously the point to begin, but something in her voice made me wonder. She was nervously fastening and unfastening the second button of her attractive blouse.

"It's marvellous that you can see again. Wonderful."

"Well, don't sound so miserable about it, darling."

She got up.

I said: "What's the matter?"

"Nothing."

"Yes, there is."

"Oh, God, I'm so unhappy, Giles."

I got up, too, and picked my way round the table, careful not to get my legs tied up with any obstructions in the way.

"What's troubling you?"

"I don't know. I feel I must tell you today, and yet I can't."

"That's helpful. I've had a feeling for weeks that you were corking something up."

"Have you? Sit down. It's—not right for you to be standing."

"I'll not faint on you. Don't worry."

"No, it's all that height. It makes me uncertain. Always did, you know."

She smiled a bit, and I sat down to please her.

She drew at her cigarette.

"I've wanted to tell you from the first. But I couldn't. That's what makes me so thankful you've got your sight back. . . ." She stopped. "That makes me sound like a bitch, doesn't it? You see——"

"Suppose," I said, "you sit down and begin in basic English. I'm all braced up now."

She did as she was told. I folded my legs and waited. We were the only people on the veranda just then. It was a veranda partly enclosed in glass, and across the other side of the gravel path was a tennis court on which a couple of men, probably convalescents, were playing singles.

You could hear the soft plop-plop of the tennis balls.

RACHEL said absolutely nothing at all.

"Does all this mean," I said, "that I've got a rival?"

She glanced up quickly.

"Yes."

"Oh," I said. It looked as if my Traviata scene wasn't going to come off as billed.

"I've been in hell, Giles. Really, I have. It was absolutely out of the blue. It was three months ago. I tried to fight against it, not see him, etcetera, do all the usual things. But it wouldn't work. It doesn't work if you feel like that."

"Who is he?"

"A man in the Navy. A lieutenant."

"Out of the blue, as you remark."

"I was going to write to you, and then I heard you were wounded. I thought I'd wait. Then I heard the rest."

"So what?"

"I couldn't tell you anything or do anything until you'd got your eyesight back. I had to help you to keep going. It was all there was to do."

"And if I didn't see again? What then?"

"I hadn't got that far."

Hadn't she? I wondered. I lit another cigarette and thought all round it.

SHE said: "You *must* think me a bitch. I know that. I don't make any excuses, except what I have made. Today's been awful. When I phoned this morning and knew you were all right I was so delighted for your sake. But I knew then that I'd got to tell you today. It was now or never."

"Can I take your tray, Mr. Gordon?" said Nurse Rylands, billowing up suddenly from behind.

I stared at the grey sunlight falling across my hands.

"Listen, Rachel," I said, when Nurse Rylands had gone. "We joined up nine months ago. Out of that we've had a weekend at your place, a week in London, and a couple of nights out in October. It's not a lot, and it's no good flogging yourself if something's happened to make it seem unimportant. It's not a good break for me, but at least I can see again; and just at present that's like the Gates of Heaven. I shall get over the rest."

"I do feel absolutely awful," she said.

"Thanks for sticking by me while I was—as I was. I suppose if this thing hadn't been a success you'd have felt bound to—go on sticking, eh . . . ?"

"No. Not bound."

"Not bound, but as good as. I think your naval bloke has done well for himself. Was he in on this?"

"More or less."

"All the prayers there must have been for my recovery!"

I paused. "Look, darling, stop mucking about with that button. You'll spoil your blouse."

She said: "It isn't as if I don't care for you in a way. I do, a great deal——"

"Suppose you leave the analysis for another day? We'll only get all tied up. Just at present everything's straightforward and clear. I've been jilted and I'm still on my feet. Metaphorically, anyway. Why worry about the rest?"

"I think," she said, "you're the grandest person I ever met."

"No, Rachel, if you only knew, I'm full of rage and bitterness. But I'm trying very hard to be the little gentleman. Don't elevate it beyond that. I'll see you again?"

"Of course—if you want to."

"I want to."

The tennis players had stopped and were doing something at the net.

"How long have you got to stay in here now?"

"A fortnight maybe. Then I'm free to go out into the brave new world. I'd like to meet your lieutenant. Perhaps we could get together and have a dinner or something."

"Of course. If you want that. You know how I feel."

"Good. That's settled, then. Now tell me about London. I haven't seen it for so long."

Later, when she left, we kissed like old friends and I watched her walk into the encircling fog. It was right that she should go that way, even though later I should have to write and say I'd changed my mind and that it would be better if we didn't meet again after all.

I'd been done out of my grand renunciation and now must make do with a small one. Obviously it was best to keep her from knowing how little I could see. There was no point in our both being miserable about it.

EVENTUALLY I went back to work. Somewhere about this time the war ended, and those who felt like it danced in the streets. I was too preoccupied forgetting Rachel and making a little daylight a long way.

The eye improved a lot, and it was surprising how much I got around to.

Driving a car was a bit of an ordeal from the beginning, because, apart from the bad vision, it isn't easy to judge distances with one eye. But golf was quite possible, and I did a lot of walking. My eyes showed no signs of injury (except that the good one kept getting bloodshot) and this fooled most people into thinking I could see as well as they could.

Certain things had to be avoided. The cinema was out altogether, and bright lights hurt. I could read well enough, but not for long periods; and for the office work I found a gem of a girl called Marigold who was only fifteen and read slowly and with the precision of a parson. I was inclined to drop things, and in the end I never accepted a cup and saucer by hand if I could avoid it.

Perspective was difficult, as it was bound to be, and there were good days and bad.

The family firm welcomed me back all right. Parker was in the Far East, but Hampden was still bending his grey head

There was something in his tone that I didn't like. I said: "You can't operate again?" He said carefully: "Why meet troubles before they come?"

over the torts, and Cousin Lewis had managed to go on getting deferments until they were no longer necessary. There was plenty for me to do, and I put in as much work as I could at the courts, since Marigold could help me to memorize the details, and it saved a lot of reading.

The first Christmas of peace I spent with my sister in Oxford. Caroline is nine years older than I am and nearly as tall. She'd married a Fellow of St. Peter's, and was a theosophist and a vegetarian. People said she ought to have been the lawyer.

She always had the effect of making me feel about fourteen and slightly sheepish.

She said: "Well, Giles, it's nice to have you at our table again. I'm glad you've recovered so well. We were so anxious for a time, weren't we, Hugh?"

"We phoned up every night," said Hugh. "They passed on our messages?"

"Yes."

"Let's see, d'you take soda or water; I forget."

"Soda, please."

"What exactly did they do?"

I knew Hugh's interest in operations—his own and other people's. I said: "Took an X-ray first, of course. Next day they stuck an electro-magnet round my head like a steel halo, so that I was the centre of a magnetic field. Then they pointed metal rods or something at my eye. After a bit of messing about, something moved in my eye, and I said, 'Ugh!' And they said, 'There it is.' Then apparently they manoeuvred it round till it came into a favourable position.

"And then they cut the eye and took out a bit of steel from Krupps."

After a long minute Caroline said: "Yet you can see perfectly well with it now?"

"Not perfectly well. I get along."

Hugh brought the drink. "I shouldn't have known there was anything wrong at all."

"That's what everyone says."

Caroline said: "Of course, Giles always has walked and moved as if he'd got an inward preoccupation and wasn't really concerned with what he was doing at any particular moment. I used to try to cure him of it; make him more practical."

"My dear Carrie, I'm intensely practical, always have been. Look how well I've settled back into the family firm."

She sipped her barley water. "I'll give you credit for that. I was afraid—well after four years away. . . ."

I said, to tease, "Did you expect me to go back to Paris?"

"No, dear. . . . But one never knows, does one? Things have been very difficult for you lately."

I didn't answer. She had never met Rachel, so there was nothing to be gained from discussing it.

Hugh said: "You must be lost in that big old house. Can you get staff?"

"I'm thinking of selling it and taking a small flat somewhere in the West End. It'll save the journey and I shall be handy for concerts and things. That's if Caroline has no objection."

"I think you're very wise," she said. "I never see any advantage in clinging to things for their sentimental value."

I looked at the table. "One thing I'm always glad about when I come here, and that's that Hugh isn't a vegetarian as well."

"I only wish he were! He'd be so much healthier."

Hugh looked apologetic but flickered a slow eyelid. "*Ad omnem libidinem projectus homo.* A man abandoned to every lust."

* * *

It wasn't long after this that things began to go back a bit. Several days the eye looked red and inflamed and it watered a good deal, and I couldn't stick lights at all. So I went round to see Halliday who'd done the job. He was non-committal and grunted at me as he put his mirror thing back on the table.

"Hm. Yes. The Keratome incision has caused a scar which isn't quite as satisfactory as it might be. However, I shouldn't worry about it. Your colour values are all right now, aren't they?"

"Oh, yes."

"No headaches?"

"No headaches."

"I'll change your glasses and give you a little protection against the light. In the meantime take things easily. Plenty of fresh air and not too much hard work. Try to consider yourself convalescent still."

"I'll try."

PRESENTLY I heard Rachel was married and had gone to live in Portsmouth. I hadn't seen her since, but I thought it safe enough to relax now and sent her some Georgian silver as a wedding present.

Probably if I had been able I should have salved my pains by finding some other girl to go about with, but that didn't seem to make sense in the existing circumstances.

I got to dining out and playing cards after. For the first time in my life I began to appreciate bridge and to take an interest in poker.

Then one day I woke up to the fact that I could see definitely less than a week ago.

At first I put it down to the weather; but, after a bit, by careful testing I realized that the rain wasn't to blame for this.

I took a taxi and drove round in a panic to see Halliday.

As was to be expected I had to wait half the morning until he could fit me in between his appointments. He grunted and nodded through what I had to say and then took me in and did the same sort of things he had done three months ago.

When he'd switched off the last light and made all the necessary notes on his card index he looked at me and said:

"Of course you're quite right, Mr. Gordon. Your sight has deteriorated since February. The cause, as I told you, is the scar of the earlier operation, which is contracting, and pulling the pupil up slightly towards the top of the eye. Normally, this would not happen, but for some reason that we don't know, perhaps because of the foreign body we had to take out of the eye, the scar got entangled and has been drawn up."

Halliday grunted and turned to make another note. "It's very disappointing, because it is reducing the value of the eye to you. I can only give you the advice I gave you before. Don't worry, take things easily. You're able to live a fairly normal life at present, aren't you, and it may never get any worse."

There was something in the tone of his voice that I didn't like.

"Or it may?"

"There's really no reason why it should."

"And if it does?"

Halliday grunted again and shut his

Continued on page 27

POST CARD

Having wonderful time

Tastes don't change in comic postcards. Favourites still after forty-five years: fat women, honeymooners

by ERIC SMITHFIELD

Please, Lord, excuse me a minute while I kick Fido!

Best seller of 1916. It sold a million and a half

There! The fortune-teller warned me against a woman with a dark past!

Recent McGill card. His best customer: Blackpool

BUCKETS AND SPADES and shrimping nets; landladies, whelks and painful sunburn: these are what holidaymakers expect at the seaside, and when the sun has extinguished itself in the evening mists they like to settle down by an open window and address dozens of comic cards to the folks still at home.

For forty-five years, postcards with fat women, mothers-in-law, courting couples and red-nosed drunks have lightened the holiday scene in the sort of saucy jokes that have been a riot since the days of Victorian variety. Jokecard history began in 1904 when young Donald McGill sat down at a drawing board in the architect's office where he was apprenticed and drew his first postcard.

It showed a skater peering wetly from a hole in the ice, and the caption read, "Hope you'll soon be out." The card went to McGill's nephew, in hospital with diphtheria.

The boy's father, much impressed, said, "I know a chap who'll pay six bob each for cards like that"; so McGill threw up architecture and joined the firm of Max Honnest in London. His first efforts were illustrations to a set of Stock Exchange quotations.

"Small Man Squeezed"

There is one of a box of sugar falling on a small man and concertina-ing him to the ground: "Sugar falling, small man squeezed." Another shows a furtive Argentinian poking a stick of dynamite under a railway line, captioned "Argentine rails going up."

It was a modest start, but the artist found he had struck an unprospected vein of English humour.

Later, McGill joined the Inter Art Company. But, after seventeen years, "they had a clean-up. I wasn't allowed to draw people with red noses or show women in bathing costume with a cleavage. It was so ridiculous that I resigned."

In 1936 he formed his own company at Streatham. "The first year we lost £365, but by 1937 we had the measure of the game." Today, at seventy-four, he looks back on the trail of 11,000 original comic cards, which sold over 150,000,000 copies and made a fortune.

McGill is silver-haired and barrel-chested, more like a product of quarter-decks, wardrooms and pink gin than of cramped years over a drawing-board. He was at Blackheath School ("with the Bishop of Wakefield, you know"), where a rugger accident caused him to lose his left foot. "But the replacement was so good I was able to play three seasons as scrum half with the old Victoria Club at Blackheath."

The sedate study of his Streatham flat is decorated not with his own colourful art but by the serious faces of more solemn ancestors: his father, a captain in the 60th Rifles; Uncle Peter, for thirty years president of the Bank of Montreal; and great-grandfather James, who founded Montreal's McGill University. By the window is an old-fashioned desk stuffed with ancient documents from the university and the bank, but the basement below is shoulder-high with lurid cards.

The 1905 Joke

He carries up an album dated 1905 and opens it at one of his first jokes. A waiter is bending over a red-nosed guest who has passed out at the banquet table, and saying: "You're next on the programme, sir, with the 'Oly City."

"Pretty terrible, I suppose," McGill shrugs, "but tastes haven't changed much since I drew that. People are less sentimental, of course. I remember when the soppy stuff went down like mother's milk."

The first years were a struggle, but business boomed during the Kaiser's war, when his cards were hung in dug-outs and treasured in p.o.w. cages.

"I was working night and day, turning out an average of nine cards a week. In 1916 I designed my biggest seller, a little girl saying her prayers while a dog pulls at her nightdress. The caption read: "Please, Lord, excuse me a minute while I kick Fido."

He produces a faded copy from the album, "There you are, a little gold-mine. Don't ask me why, but it sold a million and a half copies, and I had to redraw it when the blocks wore out."

With the exception of the depression years, between the wars was a prosperous time and McGill was selling up to 9,000,000 cards a year. In 1939 he had a five-year contract with one Blackpool customer for a million cards a year, and holidaymakers there were posting 35,000 a day.

They Sell Themselves

Today he says he can sell 10,000,000 cards a year as soon as the paper restrictions are lifted. "Since 1943 I've had begging letters from all over the country—there's no need to send travellers."

What is the sort of joke that people like best?

"The mixture doesn't vary," says McGill. "Honeymooners and mothers-in-law, fat women and thin drunks, we've been laughing at them since the days of Chaucer. People on holiday like something on the saucy side."

The art of the comic postcard has a slapstick jollity which makes "broad" jokes harmless, and few of McGill's cards have run into censorship trouble.

The first occasion was in the early days when a Blackpool dealer was fined £20 for displaying one showing a maid peering through the keyhole of a bathroom door and telling a man waiting outside in a dressing-gown: "He won't be long now, sir; he's just drying himself."

"The Isle of Man, of course, is hopeless," McGill says. "Under Manx law they have a censorship of three people. They've banned over 400 cards and are trying to get the English authorities to do the same—heaven forbid!"

His own favourite is of two women standing outside a vicarage.

"There's the vicar at the window, sponging his aspidistra."

"Horrid old man. He ought to do it in the bathroom."

That joke, he says, came as an inspiration, but his usual method is to jot down a long list of phrases and current terms. A vintage McGill is the result of careful word twisting until a simple *double entendre* is achieved.

Adam And Eve

Occasionally he gets an idea from his fan mail. One young man wrote that he always takes his girl friends to see McGill's cards: "They save me putting in days of line-shooting." This has gone on to the drawing-board as a young couple gazing at a Garden of Eden scene in an art gallery.

Blackpool is McGill's most important customer; then come Scarborough, Brighton, New Brighton and South Wales. Places like Eastbourne and the Isle of Wight aren't very interested, and ultra-respectable towns like Frinton refuse to display them.

"'Vulgar' is the word they use," shrugs the artist. "I suppose you might say that of Shakespeare, too. People who think joke cards vulgar are mostly people who have forgotten how to laugh; they can only snigger."

One of McGill's difficulties is caused by the changing fashions in dress.

I must sell 30,000 to 40,000 to show a profit. That means spreading sales over ten years or more and avoiding anything that might date a card."

He points to a drawing of a woman in a sort of glowing red sheath. "I've evolved this style; it's a combination between knee look and new look."

This year millions of comic cards will go through the post, while in Streatham the originator of a British tradition will divide his time between the drawing-board and his other great interest: anthropology.

"Gives you a sense of perspective," he says, reaching down a fat volume from the bookcase. "Makes you realize you're no more than a blade of grass."

HIGH-WIRE FAMILY

by DENNIS HOLMAN

Following in father's footsteps is their tradition. And a highly dangerous one when father specializes in somersaulting on a wire sixty feet up in the air

THE QUARTER POLES have started rattling and Patsy Allen, the tent master, looks up anxiously at the canvas of the big top pressing under a fresh wind. A couple of roustabouts are tightening guys. Vinicky, the animal trainer, Karl Fischer, the massive ringmaster, and Billy Smart, the circus proprietor, are at the ring-side discussing the timing of an act.

Sixty feet above, a man and a woman are walking across a wire with a girl balancing on a pole supported by their heads. They reach the pedestal board where three children are waiting. The man says something and the troupe descends.

They are M. Elleano, Elizabeth his wife, and their children—Olga, seventeen; Joseph, fourteen; Frieda, twelve; Armand, seven.

International Avenue

On the ground they suddenly seem to diminish in size. Elleano, the star attraction of the circus, becomes an unkempt, slouching Frenchman with a gold tooth.

"*Allons*," he says, and they go out of the big top into the animals' tent past the smell of caged lions, the Siberian bears, the elephant, the Shetland ponies and the long line of horses—Friesians, Andalusians, Lipizanas, Generales, Sacramosos, Irish hunters.

Outside it is blowing. Bits of paper are whipping across the encampment, flaps are thudding against tent walls. As the Elleanos are a star troupe they have to walk right up the international avenue of tents and caravans to theirs at the top, second only to the ringmaster's.

On the way, they pass their neighbours—Salem, the Sensational Voltage Rider; the Three Lesters from Denmark, trampoline acrobats. Madame Truzzi is feeding her Educated Pets, an assortment of poms, poodles, terriers and borzois waiting in an obedient circle. There is a racket in the tent of the Ben Ali Troupe, the Amazing Whirlwind Arab Tumblers; a flap opens, a brown, boyish face grins at the passing Elleanos and disappears again.

Superstitious About Shoes

Grandma Elleano is waiting for her family. Their meal is ready, but first they must remove and put away their high-wire shoes—a very personal matter, for the Elleanos are superstitious about their shoes and nobody but the owner may handle each pair.

Elleano is forty-two, at the peak of his career as a performer. He became a high-wire acrobat, he says, because in 1784 an ancestor, a doctor's son, ran away from home and joined a circus. Ever since, Elleanos have made a living balancing precariously, marrying into rival high-wire acts and raising more high-wire performers.

Elleano is one of sixteen. He was born in a circus on tour in South Africa. When he was three his father took him on his shoulders, climbed up a king pole and walked the straight and narrow wire path to the other pole.

At the age of four Elleano did it alone, sixty feet up. He was performing on a world tour by the time he was eight, and like his father he broke away from the family act when he married a high-wire artist and set out to perfect an act of their own.

The couple have been married nineteen years. They began modestly, expanding the act as they produced and trained their own children, and specializing in occasional feats like stringing up a wire across a street, or from a church steeple to a house-top, and walking across it with a pole and an umbrella. This is the Elleanos' first season in England.

It is a Monday, the day after the circus has arrived in town. The hundred-foot mast for Olga's steeplejack act is going up in the fairground.

Sections of the switchback, speedway, dodgem track, octopus, big wheel, ghost train, chairoplane and Noah's Ark are being assembled. Hoopla stalls, the boxing booth, the shooting gallery, and innumerable side shows are being decked out.

Olga Elleano: the man who marries her must walk the wire, too

The Star Relaxes

The place is noisy and untidy with activity, as the fun must start that evening. But Elleano is not involved. He is a star and he is resting. This is a modern, up-to-date circus. Years ago he may have assisted in a move. Now he rests.

Circuses no longer move with the animals pulling the caravans, and stopping just outside the town for everybody to dress up and assemble for a magnificent entry parade up the high street. If circus transport wasn't still so gaily painted, you might mistake a mobile show on the road for an army brigade headquarters coming up into a new position.

Plans are put into operation a week in advance. First goes Ronnie Smart, one of the proprietor's sons, on a softening-up mission, with a stack of complimentary tickets and posters for advance publicity.

On his heels follows the tent master, Patsy Allen, with two king poles and a gang to get them up. Allen chooses and marks out the pitch for the big top, careful to avoid trespassing on the ring of a circus that has used the ground previously; circus folk are superstitious about performing on a dead ring.

Before The Pay Packet

Allen has been a tent master thirty-five years. "When I was a roustabout," he says, "you had to learn your job quickly. You were always paid on Sundays, after the top had gone up—in case a few were waiting to hop it in a hurry.

"Before you were paid, you'd have to show you could tie a half-hitch knot and swing a sledgehammer. If you couldn't, it was half pay. If you could swing over both shoulders it was a bob extra."

The big top arrives at the site chosen pretty early on a Sunday. The six pieces of canvas are unloaded, unwrapped, laid on the ground in position and laced, with the bale rings raised up on blocks near the king poles.

Guy ropes are tied off and as the necks are hitched up the king poles

one hears the chant of the roustabouts: "Gula gula bong. Gula gula bong. Bong."

The wind is Allen's mortal enemy. He hates wind. He has studied it anxiously all his life, gauging its speed, watching for trouble.

"She'll stand an eighty-mile an hour gale," he says. But he won't hesitate to get his £3,000 charge down before the wind gets to that speed if he sees it has a twist to it, if he sees whirls of spinning leaves.

Once in Birmingham, when he put up a big top for the Lord Mayor, a whirlwind suddenly came up the Bull-ring at 84 m.p.h. Allen saw his quarter poles snap one after another like dry twigs, as the wind pressed down and around.

All he could do was give the order to run, staying behind himself to cut the ropes and let the canvas come down rasping like a bellows upon him. With the seats still under it, the tent was cut to ribbons.

Clowns' "Fatigues"

While Allen is arranging the seating, and "Sparks," Bert Latimer, is hooking up the lighting and sound equipment, the clowns move in with the ring. "This is a traditional clown's *fatigue*," says Reg Etheridge, the chief clown. "We help to lay the ring fence. We level the ring and give it the first dressing of sawdust."

They spit in it, too—for good luck. Circus superstitions are perhaps the most numerous of any profession and the most rigidly observed. Taboos are found everywhere.

You must not sit on the ring fence with your back to the ring. You must not walk across the ring once it is dressed. Never sweep the ring with a broom.

Never walk under a safety net. A tin trunk must never be used in an act. The first person in a queue waiting for the doors to open must not be the holder of a complimentary ticket, a nun or a women with an umbrella.

A woman knitting in the audience is considered a terrible omen; the clowns will scream at her until she stops. It's good luck, some say, if a circus travels with a pig in the menagerie and a Jew on the staff.

Clowns are mainly programme links. Their job is to keep the audience amused while the ring grooms are setting the props between the acts.

Anything For A Laugh

Etheridge will go to practically any lengths to get a laugh. In one of his gags he used to blow out a candle with a mouthful of petrol. A month ago the flame flared back. He is just out of hospital.

Smart's ringmaster, Karl Fischer, got his job when the vacancy occurred and it was found that he had the size, voice and personality to fit the rôle. He had come as a lion tamer after working on Tarzan pictures, training elephants to limp through the jungle with chocolate syrup oozing from their shoulders and tigers to attack them from overhanging branches.

Without much encouragement, Fischer will show you the scars of his profession—a gash across the shoulder, a weal up his thigh, a hole in his calf and something which looks suspiciously like an appendix operation.

While on tour and performing six days a week, the straight acts don't need rehearsing, except for timing, or if a performer is perfecting a new trick. Says Tibor, one of the Great Alexander Troupe of springboard acrobats: "We have taken twenty years to build up our act. If we want to introduce a new trick we must practise one year."

They keep fit between engagements with floor rolling, somersaulting and flipflopping. They swim, but don't dive. Acrobats never make divers because an acrobat must never get out of the habit of landing on his feet.

High-wire performers like the Elleanos must start young if they are going to start at all. After his initial introduction to height, the pupil begins balancing on a wire stretched a foot or two above the ground.

Here the act is perfected, with all its variations; cycles are ridden on their rims at this height, and somersaults repeated until there cannot possibly be a slip, before the wire is taken to the top.

"It took my son ten years to learn the high-wire somersault," says grandma. "He was quick to learn."

An aid to somersaulting is the mechanic, a leather belt that fastens round the waist and is supported by two ropes while the pupil is learning. For bareback acrobatics and trapeze work the mechanic is attached by rope over a pulley to the coach, who pulls on it if the pupil slips.

Olga learnt her aerial handstands and contortions on the ground. Once she was sure of her routine, up she went, accustoming herself gradually to height and the sway of the pole.

Now she performs at 100 feet. It would be 200 feet if they could carry the equipment. Once you're up, a hundred here or there makes no difference at all.

Hangs By Her Toes

Olga's other solo piece is on the flying trapeze hanging by her toes. She learned that when she was three from a parrot's perch in the caravan. Her instep muscles are so developed that I was not able to unhook her foot however hard I tugged.

"Before I marry a man," she promises, "he must come with me to the top of the pole!"

The Elleanos never use a safety net, and they have worked at eighty feet. He has fallen twice. Once from sixty feet in Lille, when he smashed his arm.

And in Nice, from forty-five feet, when he dislocated his shoulder. His advice if you happen to be falling, is not to panic and not to land on your head.

At one stage Elleano considered becoming a flyer or a trapeze man. He learnt to fall into the safety net on his back. (This is an important lesson, because if you land on your face you break your neck, and if you land on your feet those might snap, too.)

He learned tricks like the one-swing grab, the seat jump, the plange, and a few of the complicated somersaults, but he found he was a better high wire acrobat and decided to stay on his native territory. "The high-wire is only dangerous," he says, "if you think about danger."

Elleano's hobby is the circus. When he is not training his own children on the high-wire, he likes to watch tumblers, riders and trampoline jumpers training theirs.

One day he hopes to become a circus proprietor.

Billy Smart reckons the working costs of his circus on the road at around £1,600 a week, the biggest part going on top-of-the-bill salaries.

"There are only three human beings who know what a circus performer earns," an agent once told me. "They are the man who signs the cheque, the man who takes ten per cent, and the man who gets the balance."

The Elleanos are a top-of-the-bill attraction, inside and outside Smart's big top. They could be getting £200 a week. "It all depends," as the agent went on, "on the performance, its rating, its box-office value, customary payment for the type of act, and whether there are similar alternative acts available."

But it is possible to be specific about clowns. "A good clown is lucky if he gets £10 a week," one clown admitted. "That's only for thirty-five weeks, because it is a seasonable occupation with two blank periods in the year."

£800-a-week Troupe

It's another matter if you are a Grock. Or you might be a Charlie Rivels and have an aerial comedy act in conjunction with your four acrobatic sons. It was rumoured last year that the Rivels Troupe was earning £800 a week at Olympia.

"A star does pretty well, believe me," Billy Smart adds. "His working week is only about an hour and ten minutes!"

But Elleano, the aristocrat in a water-tight social class, snoozing in the sun after his meal, knows how much hard work has gone into putting him up there at the top of the bill. It's a climb that has taken him all his life. And he knows that he needs plenty of free time for the training that will keep him there.

He knows other things. In smaller shows the artists may give a hand with the big top—but often, thinks Elleano, at the price of their own efficiency.

Tonight the audience will pay to see him risk his neck playing with the Devil. What does he care about the opinions of men who live with their feet on the ground?

The Elleanos and Billy Smart. There have been high-wire acrobats in the Elleano family since 1784

GERMANY TRIES AGAIN

by HARRY HOPKINS

What do the Germans think and say as they go to the polls once more? It's their biggest chance in years, but they're not exactly enthusiastic

Back from Britain, young ex-p.o.w. Karl-Heinz Hesse found his father's home and animals intact. Little else, however, remained of his Nordic heritage

VERY SLOWLY THE VACUUM at the heart of Europe has at last begun to fill up. From Lubeck on the Baltic to Munich in the shadow of the Alps 27,000,000 West Germans are preparing to go to the polls in their first free general election in seventeen years.

What do they think, what do they feel as they wipe the slate clean once again and cast their votes for the Federal Government of the German Republic which could change the face not only of Germany but of all Europe?

What have they learned from two dizzy ascents and two crushing falls in a single generation?

For millions, like Karl-Heinz Hesse who lives at Mulheim, voting in a democratic general election will be a strange new experience. Karl-Heinz is twenty-two, a dark youth in a German Army peaked cap, the eldest of the three children of a foreman bricklayer. His sister works in a clothing factory.

The eyes of Karl-Heinz are deep-set and apathetic. They are the eyes of a generation in Germany today. "We had a fine time in the Hitler Jugend," he tells you. "Trips to Norway in luxury liners at cut rates. Gliding, yachting, ski-ing, motor cycling—all free." Karl-Heinz was in the motor cycling section.

At fifteen he went to camp with the Conservation Corps; at sixteen he joined the Labour Service; at seventeen, the Tank Corps. Two months later he was a prisoner in Holland.

The cage at Dieppe. Four years of barbed wire, of the shabby uniforms with the big humiliating patches. Four years to think—about what?

Then, fifteen months ago in an English prison camp, Karl-Heinz heard his number read out. He was going home. Bomber Harris, he soon discovered, had been before him. Towns were vast rubble heaps. Thousands of people lived in cellars.

His father's trim little house was still there, however, in the Heimaterde suburb of Mulheim—in the neat red-roofed row exactly like the thousands of other neat red-roofed rows that Hitler had arranged on the easiest terms for his good German workers and family men. The three rabbits, the six hens, the two sheep were still in the little animal house in the garden.

But the rest of that splendid Hitlerian world—his Nordic heritage? Where was that?

Borrowed To Wed

As it happened, Karl-Heinz himself was lucky. He landed a job with Reme. Then, when they were going to billet a refugee on his girl friend and her widowed mother, he got married and moved in.

But it hasn't been easy. If his wife wants a new skirt or a dress he has to save for six months. He still has to pay off the 400 marks he borrowed for the wedding, the 700 for the big walnut cupboard ("when a German buys something he wants it to last").

It will be a rich and remarkable fund of experience, all right, that Karl-Heinz will take with him to the national polling booth. Unfortunate that it so neatly cancels itself out.

Politics. Well, he is waiting to see. Trade union? Oh, yes, they're all members at the works. But it's the old men who keep it running. "All *we* know"—and Karl-Heinz says it listlessly—"is the Hitler Jugend."

With only the slightest variations you hear that over and over again from Germany's new voters. A veteran German politician sighed and said to me: "Formerly German youth was just not interested in politics. Now it is *against politics*."

A local cinema was reviving the film of the Nuremberg trial. "The Greatest Sensation of Our Time," announced the poster. "You See and Hear Once Again Hitler, Goering, Goebbels and the Other Great Figures. A Film That Can Never be Produced Again."

Was that it? Was German youth still pining for those good old days? Did the Fuehrer still beckon? I asked Karl-Heinz. Some, he said, believed Hitler was good until Czechoslovakia. Some until Russia. "And you?" I asked. "I think he was just a big bluffer all the time," he said.

Nevertheless, the downfall of Hitler left a void in the mind of German youth which has not yet been filled. Sooner or later—for Nature abhors a vacuum—something is going to rush in; perhaps something emotional, dangerous.

Can't Teach This Way

What of re-education, which was to build a firm foundation for democratic citizenship?

Our youth and education officers in Germany are a devoted band. But it isn't easy to convince a man of democracy's virtues when you are sitting on his head. And an admirable chain of reading rooms and a few Anglo-German discussion groups cannot cancel out the *verbotens* plastered over the doors of all the good hotels, or the portable iron curtain surrounding every Allied administrator's car.

Let us follow the Ruhr river which passes Karl-Heinz's door eastwards till, in a region of thriving little hardware factories, we come to the small town of Wetter.

Though the war swirled to its end in the "Ruhr cauldron" near here, Wetter somehow escaped the bombs. The tram stops opposite a substantial house bearing a plate, "Spill and Co."

Herr Spill comes to the door himself, squat and square, hospitable and blunt-spoken. Before the war he was

a thriving little builder with a dozen good men, a lorry and a quarry; an estimable member of the solid, comfortable middle class which was the backbone of Germany—and of Hitlerism.

Today, behind his heartiness, one senses the unease of a man whose familiar bearings have been changing too fast. No doubt Karl-Heinz would recognize the feeling.

Being older, Herr Spill's reactions are different. His plaints pour forth in a voice which gathers emotion as it goes along; grows louder, more reproachful at this backhander which fate has handed the excellent German people.

"In former times there were no poor in Germany. Now there is no nothing but poor. Everyone talks all the time, but nobody does anything to help us. Occupation costs are crippling. Stop the arms industry, yes, stop the aircraft industry, yes—but let us get on our feet again. There is no hate left in the German people. Our cities are in ruins. Millions were killed. Unless something is done soon, Deutschland ist kaputt."

Herr Spill's daughter, Gisela, explains. "The Germans," she says, "have not the courage to be poor."

Not For Women

The new democratic constitution has given women rights for the first time in German history. But in this land tradition dies hard. Says Gisela—the ex-*Bund Deutsche Madchen*—now trying to get a job teaching music to English officers' children: "Politics are not for women."

The autobahn that links the Spills' home in the East with the Hesses' in the West drives through fields of waving corn. But the skyline is always the same: the rows of tall chimneys, the pitheads, the battleship tangle of steelworks. Here is the greatest industrial concentration in the world.

Here, also, is the real issue of this election. Who will rule this Power House of Europe? Can it be geared to the service of the people, unifying, reconstructing, raising the standard of living for all? Or is it once again to be a private kingdom, a lethal flywheel of expansive nationalism, straining ever outwards, till, one day, it tears loose again?

Most Germans are still hardly aware of the momentous question that is laid before them.

Can the five million skilful organized workers of the Ruhr help them to an answer?

Paul Kierey's name, like his neighbours', is neatly engraved on a little polished silver plate on his door in the big grey roughcast block in Dortmund—city of half a million which before the war produced one-fifth of all Germany's iron and steel.

He takes us into the kitchen, dominated by one of those big, square, gleaming silver-and-white stoves that are the pride of every hausfrau's heart. Paul is an East Prussian, a quiet, obviously competent chap in his middle forties, a family man, a pipe-smoker, fond of watching football.

Politics? For once we get an immediate and thoughtful answer. Here is that rare thing in Germany—a man who knows his own mind. He knew it so well that, though it meant that after the slump he was often out of a job, he held out against joining the Nazi Party right through to the end.

Out in the open again now, shop steward with a seat on the steel plant's works council, he is deputy chairman of the local Social Democrat branch. But it has been a hollow victory. Yes, eighty-five per cent of the workers here are unionized. But about politics, Paul admits sadly, the bulk of the workers couldn't care less.

What is the trouble this time? Stirring the enormous pot of spicy potato soup that is her family's mainstay, Frau Kierey gives the answer: "*Existencekampf.*" Each man is engrossed in his personal struggle to get together again the raw materials of life: food, clothes, the solid Germanic comfort of such rooms as this, with its cuckoo clock, its framed moral motto in Gothic script.

The shops overflow, but prices are high, wages are low and Frau Kierey's purse is generally empty. "Too little to live, too much to die," she says.

Even in Bonn where the new democratic constitution was hammered out they say that the only thing that really interested people was the rations the politicians were getting!

Talk By The Boss

Look out of the Kiereys' window and you see the tall chimneys of the Huttenwerke where Paul works—the steelworks which built this excellent block of workers' flats, the steel company around which life here revolves.

That week the manager had called the men together and made a speech. Dismantling, he had said, was hitting their old export trade. Already, as they knew, the big rolling mill had gone to England, and, with it, two thousand men's jobs. Soon they might have to go on to short time.

These men might not know that the fate of Europe lay in their hands. But this they did know: four years after the war was all over Britain was taking away their jobs. "Oh, they'll never let us on our feet again," they said.

The Communists cash in. Their paint brushes are out by night. They manufacture martyrs. "Quislings," insist their slogans, "remain quislings."

If the Germans have difficulty these days in knowing what they are *for* they have less in discovering what they are *against*. Many, like Herr Spill, see the Red Army panzers rolling across to the Rhine. "Quickly, quickly," he says, "we must have a united Europe *gegen den Bolshevismus*." Karl-Heinz agrees. His father was a prisoner of the Russians. And Paul Kierey, the democrat, must keep a wary eye for infiltration.

Spell-binders Again

The Germans, let us not forget, have been this way before. Being united *against* something and *for* nothing has special dangers in a country where vast reservoirs of nationalism still lie only just below the surface. Already in Bavaria—where Hitlerism was brewed—and in other places, too, ambitious spell-binders are stirring large audiences among Germany's eleven million drifting refugees.

If to this potent body of discontent were added the power of Germany's industrial barons—now back from their prison camps—the life of the democracy about to be born might be even shorter than before. And the peril is the greater since the new frontiers seem likely to reproduce in the new parliament the ideological deadlock between Catholics and Socialists which already hamstrings the trade unions.

Germany's present leaders are old. Sixteen years—passed in exile or in concentration camps—are missing from their lives. If this great industrial nation is to recover, it is its youth which must rise up and do it.

There is perhaps a ray of light in the story of Karl-Heinz Hesse. Karl-Heinz was in England four years. He thinned turnips near Solihull. He cut wood at Northampton. And he was astonished that despite his utter lack of status he was treated like a human being.

Those amazing British actually invited him into their homes. When he went back to Germany they wrote to him. It was, he says, a revelation.

Feel Isolated

Disillusioned and apathetic as it is, there is yet one thing which all German youth wants today: to get out of Germany—to break through the isolation of its nation.

Cut off for twenty years from normal human society, first by their own delusions of Nordic grandeur, then by the horror and humiliation of defeat, what the Germans need is to be taken out of themselves and into the workaday European community.

For four years we have been telling them. Now, as they launch upon their second new start in a generation, we have to do something rather harder. We have to show them.

Paul Kierey, key steelworker, and his family. Politics? His factory mates, he admits, couldn't care less

THE HUMAN MACHINE

Cocksure!

I REMEMBER the late Henry Ford saying that anyone who thought he was fixed for life had better look out. The next turn of the wheel would probably jolt him off.

That applies to all those who are cocksure in their opinions.

"No man can split the atom," a great scientist once proudly declared.

That boast makes strange reading today!

Our own opinions may not deal with such world-shaking things as atoms. Even so, we should base them on as many hard facts as we can discover. Otherwise the near future may make us look perfect fools!

by ROFFE THOMPSON

Brook (left) at Shakespeare Festival. His *Love's Labour's Lost* was a triumph ; critics slated *Romeo and Juliet*

Backstage prodigy who steals the show

by LAWRENCE EARL

At twenty-one, Peter Brook had to fire over the footlights to attract attention. At twenty-four, as Covent Garden producer, he gets too much

PETER STEPHEN PAUL BROOK is a twenty-four year old theatrical producer who never appears on the stage himself but is more consistently praised by critics than most acting stars. He is an ex-infant prodigy who has performed the difficult trick of remaining prodigious even after he grew up.

He has a genius for fashioning success from vehicles which should have failed and with actors who have had little experience and no limelight. A recent example of this was *Dark of the Moon*, a play which ran for 101 performances after critics had pointed in two directions at once by damning the play and almost hysterically applauding the production.

Brook has produced plays in Birmingham, Stratford-on-Avon and London since he was seventeen. Three years ago he sent one of his actors on to the stage before the rise of the curtain on *The Brothers Karamazov*, carrying two of the largest and noisiest pistols in London.

The actor pointed his guns deliberately over the footlights. He fired. After their first unanimously convulsive shock, the customers applied every available eye and ear to what was happening on the stage.

In a similar manner, though usually without the assistance of firearms, he has been demanding—and getting—respectful attention for both himself and his work ever since, at the age of four, he decided his future revolved in the orbit of the theatre.

Goes On Learning

Brook, now Director of Productions at the Covent Garden Opera, is one of those rare and spectacular mortals who seem to have been born just after taking the equivalent of a university degree and who go on learning where others leave off.

Since — he says — he produced, directed and spoke all the parts in his first play twenty years ago, he feels it is now time critics forgot his precocious past and concentrated on his brilliantly mature present.

Brook, who has a smooth, petulant, little boy's face, topped by an unruly, woolly-fronted head of hair, is extremely sensitive to the opinions of others.

Some time ago he produced two short Jean-Paul Sartre plays on one programme, *The Respectable Prostitute* and *Men Without Shadows*. Film star Rita Hayworth attended the opening night and, with the cast and others, trailed along to a celebration party.

After a while Peter, who had been basking headily in the praise for his production methods, noticed a dark, thick-set man silently brooding in a corner. Amiably, he approached him.

"How did you like the plays?" he asked.

The dark man scowled.

Hurt, Brook tried again to draw him out, but without success. The more the stranger said nothing, the more anxiously Peter attacked. He felt the stern silence implied equally stern disapproval and he wanted to know why.

Finally he gave up, but when the guests were leaving for home he called the host aside.

"Who," he whispered, "is that dark, silent man?"

"Oh, didn't you know?" was the reply. "He's Miss Hayworth's bodyguard."

Brook says he can't remember *not* being fascinated by the theatre. In actual fact he was reading the plays of Shakespeare—alternating them with cheap, paper-backed thrillers—before his fifth birthday.

"I can't say I always understood what I was reading," he admits, "but they gave me a great romantic excitement."

The Toy Theatre

It was during this period that his father bought him a toy theatre, complete with curtain and lights that actually switched on and off. This was probably a grave tactical error, as Brook senior soon discovered.

Peter immediately retreated into the playroom he shared with older brother Alexis and cut scenic backgrounds and characters out of stiff paper. He placed these on the toy stage. Then, with a volume of *Hamlet* in his pudgy fist, he played out the parts of the great tragedy.

The curtain on this first Peter Brook production went up at 2 p.m. Hours later, his mother entered the playroom and insisted that her young son take a short interval for his tea.

"Shush!" the boy replied angrily. "Can't you see I'm performing Shakespeare?" There were no more interruptions.

By eight o'clock, long past his usual bed time, the show was over. It had taken six hours. Peter's anxious parents then suggested he eat something and go straight to sleep. Peter had other ideas.

"I've thought up some splendid improvements," he said. "I'm going to run through the play just once again."

Even for an infant prodigy, this was going too far. Kicking and shrieking, he was taken off to his bed.

He wasn't always so easily defeated. That angry rebellion against organized authority was merely the first of a long line.

"I went to half a dozen schools," he says, "where I quarrelled, fought and made trouble."

Temper Is Useful

This sort of thing would be a handicap to the balanced development of an average man. Brook has made capital of everything he has experienced in life and what he learned about losing his temper as a child he puts to controlled use as an adult.

He explains it thus: "In opera there are so many people who, with complete selfishness, are constantly fighting for their own point of view. But getting what you want is simply a matter of making the biggest fuss for the longest time.

"I had a head start. At an early

age I learned how to scream a little longer."

Brook was born in London of Russian parents, though his father, a wealthy manufacturing chemist, was of English extraction. Neither of his parents had any theatrical background.

"My childhood," he says, "was completely highbrow. But by the time I was fourteen my visual sense was the most developed of the lot."

At twelve, Peter's parents discovered that he had a glandular ailment and sent him off to Switzerland and then elsewhere on the Continent. As a result, he speaks French, Italian and German fluently. He also has a working knowledge of Spanish, Portuguese and Russian.

Directed Films At Sixteen

When he was sixteen he wangled a vacation job at Merton Park studios, where, after a couple of weeks' apprenticeship in the cutting-room, he was considered good enough to direct short advertising films.

At seventeen Brook went up to Oxford, where he confesses he learned more about life outside the classroom than he did in it. He was still bitten by the film bug, apparently incurably, but after a lot of deep thought he decided that it would take too long to work from lowly clapper boy to distinguished director.

Somewhere he had read that the longest way around was the shortest way home. Accordingly, he resolved to gatecrash the industry via the theatre, a detour on which he is still travelling. "Films are my real business," he says. "That's where I'll wind up."

Characteristically, he wasted no time. Gathering together a group of enthusiastic volunteers, all undergraduates, he signed up the Torch Theatre in Knightsbridge for his production of *Dr. Faustus*.

With an empty pocket he managed to meet the required down payment only by sending the cast out at the last desperate moment to sell tickets. The play, which cost £63 to produce, showed a profit of £17.

Brook then proceeded to film Laurence Sterne's *Sentimental Journey* with the same group of undergraduates who had helped him put *Dr. Faustus* across, plus £250 for expenses.

Got Police To Help

By some miracle of diplomacy still not fully understood by his undergraduate colleagues, Peter persuaded the town police to rope off entire streets while outdoor scenes were shot.

He had managed also to borrow an ancient fire engine and Brook thought it would add a touch of realism actually to photograph the burning to the ground of a derelict building. This was done, to the horror of those who were not in on the plot.

After he finished *Sentimental Journey*, the university authorities decided that they were fed up with having the place turned upside down, even by a boy wonder. They approached Peter.

"You may continue at Oxford," they said, "only if you sign an undertaking not to take part in any theatrical or cinematographical production during term time. Otherwise no."

Brook recognized an ultimatum when he heard one. He signed.

He left Oxford in 1944, minus a degree, and landed a job script writing with Gaumont British. Shortly after this the script writing degenerated into directing more "toothpaste" pictures. He decided he was getting into a rut.

Quitting films, he immediately arranged to produce Jean Cocteau's *Infernal Machine* at the tiny Chanticleer Theatre. The result was everything Brook could have wished.

One critic who considers his word to be law said, "I believe that in nineteen-year-old Peter Brook we have a producer who may develop into something first class. . . . He gave me no peace until I went to see *Infernal Machine*, and I am grateful for his pertinacity."

This welcome publicity led to greater things. He was invited by E.N.S.A. to produce *Pygmalion*. William Armstrong, who had agreed to produce *Man and Superman* at the Birmingham Repertory but had been obliged to cancel, saw the dress rehearsal. Impressed by Brook's grasp of theatre he wired Sir Barry Jackson, Birmingham's director, that here was his perfect substitute.

Thus, at twenty, Peter Brook had become a full-fledged producer. When Sir Barry moved to Stratford-on-Avon he took Brook along to produce *Love's Labour's Lost*, which sent the critics into ecstasies, and *Romeo and Juliet*, which they soundly rapped.

It was now time for a determined attack on headquarters. In London he produced the Jean-Paul Sartre plays, *Men Without Shadows*, *The Respectable Prostitute* and *Vicious Circle*.

Men Without Shadows he produced so realistically that people in the audience fainted during a tense torture scene.

Became The Test

"I consider that a real triumph," he says. "I couldn't have been more delighted. When we took the play on tour we always measured its success by the number of faints."

Then came a startling departure. He had gone into the theatre as a short cut to the screen and now, suddenly, he was asked to join the staff at Covent Garden to produce opera. He accepted.

Asked what title he'd like, he promptly invented one: Director of Productions.

Not only the title, but the job itself is entirely new. Opera over the centuries has always had enough officials to fight for the musical side. The need was to create an equivalent to the musical director, who would be in charge of stagecraft and straight production. This Brook now is.

He gets up at about eight in the morning, from which time his phone rings constantly. He has learnt to ignore the ringing and even his close friends find that when he is busy with a new production, as he is at the moment, the best way to reach him is by sending a telegram.

He waits until his phone is momentarily silent and then snatches it, to begin putting through his own business calls. While dressing he may contact a designer in Paris, a singer in Milan or a producer in Brussels.

At ten, he may attend a rehearsal. He may stay home and work. He may go to a museum to check up on period costumes. Or he may go to his office, a tiny room on the second floor of the Royal Opera House which he shares with his pretty blonde secretary, Sylvia Bowen.

He usually works on several projects at the same time. Most urgent when I visited his office was the task of getting *The Olympians*, a new opera by Arthur Bliss and J. B. Priestley, into shape for a September première.

He was also working on the next opera but one and hoping to get Salvadore Dali to do the designs. And Alfred Hitchcock, the film director, had asked him to stage a dance production number in which Marlene Dietrich will perform. He was working out ideas for that.

He plans to produce a French play, probably late in November, and has agreed to do *Crime and Punishment* for television.

Although he complains wistfully that he cannot possibly keep up with all the current plays, operas, ballets and films produced by others, he spends at least five evenings a week trying to do so. His friends say he hates to waste a single working moment and even reads scripts in his bath.

Globe-trotting Singers

Brook thinks that opera is a hundred years behind the times. He says that there is a shortage of first-class singers and the good ones, anxious to make as much money as possible, keep hopping around the world with the four or five parts they know well. They have little time for rehearsals.

"No first-rate singer is interested in doing new parts," he says. "For this reason new operas almost always open with tenth-rate singers."

Brook claims that, until now, there has been nobody to fight this situation. Opera directors have been either ex-singers with the singer's conservative point of view, or business men who were interested primarily in the box office and cost cutting. Now, Brook feels he has struck the first blow in an opera revolution in which stagecraft and acting will find a place alongside singing.

His concern for the future of opera is unmistakably genuine, but his concern for the future of Peter Brook is even closer to his heart. He's learned a great deal since the days of *The Brothers Karamazov*.

He doesn't have to use pistols now to attract attention.

"Hates to waste a single working moment": Brook reads script in bath

Sauce for the gander

Cobham grabbed at the hostess as she passed. "Hi-ya, Beautiful. Sit down and have a bite." "Sorry," she said. "Later maybe"

by RALPH ARNOLD

ILLUSTRATED BY JOHN PIMLOTT

Odd that the passengers of Flight 222 should be so interested in the Prestwick murder case. Odder things were in store before landing

"THERE WILL BE A DELAY of one hour for Transatlantic Flight 222," the polite official at the air terminal told Charles Meadows. "Oh, no, sir," he added, "nothing *wrong*. Just a weather report that's come in. Your flight number will be called at seven forty-five over the public address system. In the meantime, sir, the bar is open, and there is a restaurant at the west end of the main hall."

Charles Meadows, bound for Toronto on business, spent three-quarters of an hour eating a meal that was a cross between tea and dinner and then strolled over to the bar. He felt vaguely worried about the weather report. Air line officials were like nurses in a hospital—you never quite knew when they were being reassuring. He was also feeling rather lonely. It was a delightful surprise when one of the figures leaning against the bar turned round and he found himself gazing at the distinctive and unmistakable features of Jervis House, K.C.

There had been a time when those small but very intelligent eyes and that curious parrot beak had challenged the world from a long, lean face. But gradually, through the years of their friendship, Charles had watched a tide of flesh engulf them. Now Jervis House was, not to put too fine a point on it, monstrously fat.

"Charles," he bellowed. "Charles, come here, you old ruffian. Are you on Flight 222? So am I. Do you know Mr. . . . Mr. . . ."

"Cobham," said the man standing next to him.

"Mr. Cobham—Mr. Meadows. Mr. Cobham and I," Jervis went on, "were drawn together by a liking for double brandies. You won't have one? You'll need it. We've a long and perilous journey ahead of us."

"I'm told on pretty good authority," Mr. Cobham began, "that our route's been badly messed up. It was to have been Shannon—Gander—Montreal. Now, for a start, they're sending us up to Prestwick. And maybe from Prestwick straight over to Gander. But I doubt it."

Charles Meadows looked with interest at this knowledgeable traveller. Tall, fattish and nearly bald, he was one of those indeterminate business men who always seem to travel by air and whose age, occupation and social standing are so difficult to place.

"Prestwick," Jervis House observed. "That's Scotland, isn't it? Puts me in mind of the Prestwick case. Remember it, Charles?"

Charles nodded. "Vaguely," he said. "There was a nasty man called Lord Prestwick, and his wife killed him by dropping a heavy weight on to his head. The Booby-trap Murder. Wasn't that how it went?"

"Well, not exactly like that," Jervis said. "For one thing, I'll have you know, though she was tried on a charge of murder, Lady Prestwick was acquitted."

"And for another," Mr. Cobham put in, "it wasn't just any old heavy weight. It was a fifteenth-century pike, a *fauchard*, eight feet long and with razor-sharp edges back and front."

Jervis and Charles looked at him with respect.

"Your memory must be pretty good," Charles remarked.

"I followed the case with some care," Mr. Cobham explained, "and I have a liking for facts. Yes, I recall the Prestwick case very clearly indeed."

A preparatory whirring came from the loudspeakers, followed by a precise female voice: "Will passengers on Transatlantic Flight 222 please proceed immediately to the east exit—I repeat, the east exit—where they will find a bus waiting to take them to the airfield."

The three men sat together in the bus, Charles peering a little anxiously out of the window at the brightly lit and peculiarly shaped factories strung along the Great West Road; and when they reached the airport they remained together in the long waiting-room with its basketwork chairs and coconut matting.

Their names were called separately to go through the Customs, but they joined forces again when Flight 222 proceeded in a straggling procession towards their aircraft. Together they mounted the tall aluminium ladder, to be greeted by a smiling air hostess in a trim blue uniform and a blue forage cap set at a jaunty angle on a riot of dark curls.

IN the aircraft, the seats were arranged two by two down either side of a central aisle. Charles and Jervis sat next to each other, with Mr. Cobham, flanked by an empty seat, facing them.

The upholstery was green, the roof and sides of the cabin were covered in soft grey felt, and in the rack above their heads were neat little stacks of blue blankets and pillows. The air hostess bustled round, tying labels on to their hats and overcoats. "Hallo, Beautiful, how's tricks?" called Mr. Cobham, grinning.

Charles Meadows felt that she might well have resented this rather precipitate familiarity, but she must have been well used to advances of this kind, for she gave Mr. Cobham a charming smile and even sat down in the empty seat and showed him how to fasten his safety belt—a piece of business with which, Charles suspected, he was already conversant.

"Mind you," Mr. Cobham observed, when the girl had passed on down the cabin, "jury or no jury, Lady Prestwick was as guilty as they come."

Jervis House looked up sharply.

"The reason she got off," Mr. Cobham went on, "was because she was defended by Sir Arthur Stone. There's an advocate for you!" He kissed the tips of his fingers. "Look at her threat to kill Lord P. the day before. Look at that business of the borrowed stepladder and the ball of twine. Look at the gimlet and that hole she bored in the door-case. If she hadn't rigged up a booby trap, then my name's not Jack Cobham."

The legend, "Please fasten safety-belts and extinguish cigarettes" appeared suddenly in illuminated letters on the partition wall between the aft cabin and the air hostess's kitchen-lobby. One by one the engines were started up and the cabin began to vibrate. Jervis House and Mr. Cobham, seasoned air travellers, picked up magazines, and Charles Meadows stared out of the little circular porthole window by his side.

After a period of intensive roaring the aircraft began to taxi forward, swinging round until it was facing down a great black avenue flanked by bright-blue, spaced lights. Then the intensity of the din increased and the lights began to flash by with decreasing intervals until the lighted huts and hangars, instead of being on either side, suddenly appeared far below, with the lights of the outer suburbs of London looking for all the world like hundreds and thousands scattered over the surface of a large, dark cake.

At Prestwick, a uniformed young man

with a burr in his voice said: "Welcome to Prestwick, Scotland. Dinner will be served in the restaurant. You will stay here for one and a half hours."

Clambering into coats returned to them by the air hostess, the trio made their way into a building that was a replica of the airport building at London—miles of passages and long rooms filled with chairs and fire extinguishers.

Mr. Cobham led the way unerringly to the restaurant, where they ordered dinner. "I think I'd better have a word with a chap I know here," he said. "Nice to know what our route will be and what's holding us up."

He got up and disappeared behind the serving screen at the end of the room. Jervis House raised his eyebrows. "The sort of chap who always knows other chaps everywhere," he remarked. Charles Meadows grinned. "Look," he said, "tell me a bit more about the Prestwick case. It happened about five years ago, didn't it."

Jervis nodded. "Lord Prestwick," he began, "was a brute. I used to see something of him at one time. That's why the case interested me. About fifty-five at the time he was killed, rich as they come, and with all the vices—drink, women, gambling.

"He was a Scot, and proud of it, with a big place near Inverness and a small country cottage in Grebeshire. He'd been divorced three times and then he upped and married a girl young enough to have been his daughter. Charming, I believe she was. Not quite his class, you know, but pretty and well behaved and, by all accounts, far too good for him.

"Of course the inevitable happened. He pulled himself together for a short while and then started off again on his old tricks. There were quarrels, and finally things blew up into the father and mother of a row one morning at breakfast.

"They were down at the house in Grebeshire and the chauffeur-gardener was weeding the flower bed outside the dining-room windows. He couldn't see in, but he heard Lady P. threaten his lordship. 'One of these mornings,' she said to him, 'I'll bash your brains out—if you've got any.' A girl, you'll observe, of some spirit.

"Later on that same day the chauffeur found that three things were missing from the garage. A stepladder, a ball of twine and a gimlet.

"So much for the background. Now for the scene of the crime. The dining-room had three doors. One led into the kitchen passage. One led into the hall. And the third led into a little room with an outside door which Lady Prestwick used as a flower-room. It had a sink in it and shelves for vases and so on, and no one else ever used it.

"The dining-room itself was a biggish room, and hung above the fireplace, projecting out a bit from the wall, was a collection of weapons—you know the kind of thing, battleaxes and pikes and ironmongery of that type arranged in some kind of a pattern. Well, next morning, round about nine fifteen——"

He broke off as Mr. Cobham hustled back and resumed his seat.

"We're changing aircraft here," Cobham announced, "and proceeding to Shannon—as I thought. Weather over the Atlantic's lousy. Hi-ya, Beautiful!"

The little air hostess was passing their table and Mr. Cobham made a grab at her arm.

"Come and sit down and have a bite with us," he suggested.

She shook her head. "Sorry. I'd love to, but there are things to do."

"Have a heart now," Mr. Cobham urged. "We're having a nice cosy talk, all about the Prestwick case. You remember, the Booby-trap Murder."

Charles Meadows, who was watching the girl, was surprised to see a sudden blush that started in the V of her neat white blouse and spread quickly up her neck and over her cheeks.

"Some other time," she murmured. And then she hurried off, threading her way between the maze of little tables.

When they were in the air it was difficult to talk, and Charles amused himself by staring out of the window into the darkness. The exhaust outlet pipe from one of the engines glowed a fiery red, and by the time they flew over the coast of Ireland it looked like a large white piece belonging to a jigsaw puzzle.

Shannon airport was very like London and very like Prestwick. This time there was a shorter halt and no dinner. They gravitated to the bar, and when Mr. Cobham had ordered three double brandies he disappeared as usual in search of information.

"We should have flown straight on to Gander," he explained on his return, "but they've gone and routed us to Keflavik in Iceland. Godforsaken spot, that. I was once held up there for a couple of days. Well, no good meeting trouble half way—that's what I always say. And now, sir, if the Prestwick case still interests you. . . ."

"I was telling Meadows here the story," Jervis House said. "I'd got to breakfast on the day of the murder—that was the day after the chauffeur had overheard the quarrel. Well, you'll correct me, Mr. Cobham, if I go wrong, but so far as I remember Lady Prestwick was first down and went into the garden to pick some flowers. Then Lord Prestwick came into the dining-room and presumably sat down and began his meal.

"The next thing that happened was that Lady Prestwick opened the door between the dining-room and the flower-room. She had a vase in her hand and, according to her own story, she called to her husband to come and take it from her because it was heavy.

"He got up from his place at the head of the long table and as he passed the fireplace this pike or battleaxe or whatever it was crashed down from the wall and split his skull open. Death, as they say, was instantaneous."

He paused and looked at Mr. Cobham. "That's how it went, wasn't it?" he asked.

"That's so," Mr. Cobham said.

"And the whole thing might have passed off as a very unfortunate accident," Jervis went on, "if the chauffeur hadn't gone to the police with his story. The worm! He'd been a great crony of his lordship's apparently, and had a down on Lady P. He had some quite extraordinary name."

"Bugg," Mr. Cobham said.

"That was it. Bugg. D'you know," Jervis House said reflectively, "if my name was Bugg, I really believe that I should change it."

Mr. Cobham nodded. "I dare say you're right," he agreed. "In a business like mine, now, you'd never get anywhere with a name like Bugg."

"Anyway," Jervis went on, "the police had a look round and they found one very odd and significant thing. They found that a hole had been recently bored high up over the door leading to the flower-room. It was beside the fireplace, that particular door. And they also found, hidden in the flower-room, the ball of twine that the chauffeur had missed from the garage. That made them think, and some bright fellow evolved the theory that Lady Prestwick had rigged up a lethal booby trap.

"She had had plenty of opportunity during the previous day. Her husband had been at a race meeting. The only maid in the house had had a day off. Having borrowed the steps she could have tied one end of the twine to the pike, passed the twine through a little loop affair that she had screwed above the flower-room door and left the end of the string hanging down.

"All she had to do was to catch the end of the twine, call to her husband to come and take the vase and then, as he passed under the trophy, pull the string and down the pike would have come on to his head."

"Golly," Charles said. "D'you suppose that's what she really did?"

"Sure thing," Mr. Cobham said.

"The jury," Jervis House observed, "thought otherwise. You see, my friend Arthur Stone, who defended her, had quite another explanation for these awkward borrowings and borings.

"Certainly she had borrowed the stepladder, because she wanted to dust the trophy. Indeed, in dusting it she might, most unluckily, have loosened the pike. And certainly, at the same time, she had borrowed the twine and the gimlet because she was going to kill two birds with one stone and fit a metal loop over the door from which, in due course, she intended to hang an embroidered bell-pull. She was very keen on embroidery. She needed the twine to measure how long the bell-pull should be."

Mr. Cobham snorted. "A likely story," he observed.

"Ah," Jervis House said, "but he didn't leave it there. Remember, Lord Prestwick had to get up out of his chair and pass the fireplace and at exactly the right moment Lady Prestwick had to pull the string. Arthur Stone tried a little experiment. He dressed his clerk up in a tin hat and protective clothing, rigged up the booby trap in exactly the way that Lady Prestwick was supposed to have rigged it, stood by the door with the string in his hand, and got the clerk to get up out of the chair at the head of the table and pass the fireplace.

"As he passed the fireplace Arthur pulled the string. Six times they did it, and once and once only did the pike graze the man's shoulders. All the other times were clean misses. That's what impressed the jury."

Mr. Cobham nodded. "I told you he was clever," he said. "Now, suppose he had been on the other side. Suppose he had been for the Crown. Will you tell me that he couldn't have thought up a story—just as convincing—that would have got the woman hanged?"

Jervis House shrugged.

"You, yourself," Mr. Cobham persisted. "Suppose you had been in his place. Couldn't you have thought up something?"

Jervis opened his eyes wide. "That's a challenge," he said. "I'll have to give that a bit of thought."

When they reached Keflavik Airfield it was just beginning to get light and there was a snowstorm in full spate, so that they really needed their overcoats which the air hostess handed to them as they passed down the gangway to the exit. Boys with brick-red faces and fur caps and fur-lined boots held the steps in place and the runways had great red stains on them where, according to the well-informed Mr. Cobham, the packed snow and ice had been thawed with salt.

Between Shannon and Keflavik, Charles and Mr. Cobham had dozed fitfully in their tilt-backed chairs. But Jervis House had kept on the little spotlight that directed a beam of illumination on to his knee and, sitting bolt upright, had covered sheet after sheet of paper with his small, neat writing.

Inside the airfield building it was blazing hot. They had a breakfast of bacon and eggs in a wooden-walled room in which radiators were blasting away inside wire cages.

Mr. Cobham returned from his usual search for authoritative news. "The first plan," he announced, "was that we were to fly straight on from here to Montreal. Then we were to touch down at Gander. Now that's been changed and we're to call at Goose Bay in Labrador."

"It only remains," Charles remarked, "for us to pay a visit to Gosling."

Jervis House brought his fist thumping down on the table.

"Gosling," he said. "I've been trying to think of that name for hours. Gosling. That, my dear Charles and my dear Mr.

Continued on page 20

"Here! Have I or have I not been trying to get her for the last half hour?"

NOW YOU KNOW

by BERNARD GEIS

THE COLOUR SCHEME OF your bedroom may influence your sleep, according to psychologists. Bright, cheerful colours, such as pink, canary and orange, were long favoured for bedroom walls and furnishings. But it is now believed that such vivid colours give off disturbing light effects and that discreet blues and greens are most conducive to a restful mood inviting deep sleep.

JOHN BULL August 13 1949

Puff of air holds them up

by JOHN MAY

The smoke from a bonfire, the smell of a farmyard keep the glider pilot on the track of the breeze

Hubert Wheatcroft and a first-week pupil wait for breeze before getting winch tow at the Dunstable airfield

THE WINCH HAULED suddenly at the steel cable. The man holding our wingtip ran fast and let go. We accelerated for a few bumpy yards on the skid, the winch hauling us across the grass as a boy would haul a kite. We swept into the air, shooting up like a lift.

Ahead, the nose of the glider had reared against the sky. Over the side the ground fell dizzily away. I tried not to hold on too tightly.

Then, as it levelled off, the glider seemed to be hardly moving. The pilot jerked hard with his left hand at the yellow knob of the cable release. The tow-rope fell away towards the winch, now below us. He eased the stick forward. The machine's nose went down. We started to glide.

Hung On A Cloud

It was amazingly peaceful. The view had extended tremendously, and height had transformed itself pleasantly into distance. In the stillness, the cockpit might have been suspended from a cloud. But in fact, as always in the air, things were happening fast.

Instruments: they weren't easy to read at first sight. Altimeter, about 400 feet. On the airspeed indicator, a comfortable cruising speed of 37 m.p.h. A pair of upright glass tubes—the variometer—had a green ball and a red to indicate the speed of the sailplane's gain or loss of height. To try to keep in the rising current the pilot threw the machine into a banking turn to the left. Then the green ball sat down and the red one moved upwards.

We came full circle, straightened out towards our landing point. The pilot reached out to a red grip, pulled on the air brakes. As flaps projected momentarily from our wings, we plunged as if in a giant swingboat. A field of oats rushed up and under. We skimmed high grass at the aerodrome's edge, bumped once or twice, and stopped. One wingtip subsided gently on to the ground.

It was possible to sense how motorless flying could "grow on you." It is a sport which thrills even hardened aeroplane pilots.

The London Gliding Club has a fleet of a dozen gliders at its Dunstable headquarters. They range from elementary "flying bedstead" instructional types—similar to the museum aeroplanes of fifty years ago — to modern streamlined sailplanes that are sheer beauty. Three winches launch them, and three cars retrieve cables and machines.

On a favourable day there may be a dozen aircraft soaring above the ridge. Sometimes one will fly out, start circling and rise steadily into the blue. Making for a cloud, it will soar even higher and disappear into the distance. A little later watchers on the hilltop may see a car, beetle-like in the distance, hitch on to a silvery tube-shaped trailer near the clubhouse. Then it will drive round the buildings and out of sight.

Dismantle After Flight

Later that day, perhaps as far away as Norwich, Southend or the West Country, a tired pilot will bring his craft down safely in a field or on an aerodrome, where the retrieving car will find him. Wings, fuselage and tail unit of the dismantled glider will be packed into the trailer, and after a meal somewhere the pilot and driver will set out for home.

Dunstable is a magnet to dozens of young men and women who want urgently to fly like this. The London Club offers them temporary membership covering a twelve-day course. They sleep in dormitories, eat four meals a day in the club restaurant, and enjoy "the best equipped and most alive school of instruction in the country."

The school is run by Hubert Wheatcroft, the club's chief instructor. Both "Wheaty" and his assistant are full-time professionals. Wheatcroft's gingery beard goes with a modest manner and a witty tongue. The beginner starts "flying" in a breeze of ten or fifteen miles an hour. He sits strapped into the bucket seat of his elementary trainer with less in front of him than if he were riding a bike. The machine is stationary. There's just a joystick between his knees and a rudder bar for his feet. His job, Wheatcroft explains, is to balance on the ground by using the ailerons.

Ground slides come next, then hops. There are no instruments, and at first the pupil is not supposed to use the rudder. He has to learn to feel the stick and fly by ear. Every glider has its own characteristic note signifying a safe flying speed.

The hops grow higher, and the pupil progresses to a more advanced machine.

It takes about the same time to learn to fly a glider as it does to drive a car. Even if he has never been off the ground before, a good pupil may qualify for his "A," "B" and "C" certificates on a twelve-day course. The "A" involves a flight of thirty seconds; the "B" two qualifying flights of forty-five seconds or more, with a third, including right and left turns, lasting one minute. To earn his "C" the pilot has to maintain height above his starting point for more than five minutes; it involves passing from simple gliding to the more advanced art of soaring.

A glider flies by planing continually "downhill." To soar, a pilot must find —and keep within—a current of air which is rising fast enough to maintain or increase his machine's height despite its continually sinking downwards. Dunstable's "C" aspirants usually soar in the wind which rises as it strikes the side of the hill.

Ahead of the pilot who has qualified for his "C" certificate are two objectives: the Silver "C" badge and the Golden "C," both issued by the British Gliding Association under the auspices of the Royal Aero Club on behalf of the Federation Aeronautique Internationale.

Up For Five Hours

Three hundred British pilots have qualified for the Silver "C" badge in the last twenty years. It requires a flight of five hours, a climb to one thousand metres (3,280 feet), and a cross-country journey of fifty kilometres (31 miles).

There are few holders of the Golden "C" in Britain. Pilots have to fly 300 kilometres (186 miles) cross country and climb to 3,000 metres (9,843 feet, nearly two miles).

In cross-country gliding the pilot is continually collecting height and then expending it by gliding down to a spot where he hopes to collect more. He has to make allowance for winds that blow in varying speeds and directions at different levels—generally the higher the faster.

Between chilly heights and the times near the ground when he is searching for more lift (or a safe landing), the pilot has to read a map as well as the clouds, and

recognize strange places from the air. He may be in the sky for as long as seven or eight hours.

The "ABC Guide" to the highways of the sky is the tephigram—a chart of air temperatures at different heights that tells advanced pilots whether long-distance soaring is possible. This information is broadcast daily on 1,224 metres by the Air Ministry especially for glider pilots.

A cross-country pilot starting from Dunstable normally uses first the hill lift and then searches for a thermal—a current of air rising because it is warmer than the rest. Thermals grow wider and rise faster as they gain height, and the pilot who manages to circle his sailplane in one rises with it. A useful thermal is sometimes indicated by the soaring smoke from a garden bonfire, or by a smell of chickens or pigs that rises sky high.

There are some forty clubs in the gliding movement in Britain today, excluding Services clubs. They operate about 150 gliders and claim a petrol ration for ground equipment and members' cars.

Costs Under £5

Last year Dunstable made six thousand launches for more than two thousand flying hours. This included both training hops and long flights. Apart from their entrance fees and annual subscription, it cost the club's two hundred members an average of less than £5 each in flying-time payments.

Outside the busy season, the all-in cost of a twelve-day course is thirty shillings a day including meals and lodging. After the course pupils may become full club members for a reduced fee.

Gliding is not solely a summer sport. As early as February 25 this year a pilot was launched at Dunstable and flew seventy-six miles to Frinton. In March, Dudley Hiscox, chairman of the London Club, flew seventy miles from Elstree to Lee-on-Solent, starting with an aero-tow launch; and a Midland pilot flew over one hundred miles, landing at Newbury Race Course, Berkshire.

This sort of flight is made with the best sailplanes available in Britain. There are several among the score of privately owned machines at Dunstable; some belong to syndicates of young pilots.

Built of silver spruce, with a stressed plywood skin, these craft have "the aerodynamics of an arrow." Their fifty feet of wingspan will keep them airborne on a gradient so slight that they appear to be flying level. All aerobatics — loops, zooms, vertical banks, flick rolls and even inverted loops—are within their compass when they have sufficient speed.

Easy To Handle

The actual flying of gliders becomes progressively easier as a pilot goes to more advanced machines. The high-efficiency sailplanes are the easiest aircraft in the world to handle—and the safest. But it would not be flying if there were not exciting emergencies at times.

Injuries to pilots, however, are rare and seldom serious. Gliding is the one form of flying which allows you to learn from mistakes. From most crashes which wreck a glider the pilot steps out unharmed.

Wheatcroft's young fliers are more worried about damaging the aircraft than hurting themselves. One pupil's mistake can stop the others flying. Extract from Wheatcroft's log of the last day of one course:

"In the evening, R——, consistently good throughout the course, decided to dispense with the 'Theory of Flight.' Releasing at 300 feet, he flew with the nose, well up and on the final turn the machine just fell to the ground and disintegrated. . . . This performance spoiled the course which had been free from damaged aircraft."

This pupil (incidentally a power pilot) escaped with a broken leg!

SAUCE FOR THE GANDER

Continued from page 18

Cobham, was the name of the maid in the Prestwicks' Grebeshire house. Gosling. A nice girl, I remember being told, fond of Lady Prestwick. Gave her evidence, such as it was, very nicely. Extraordinary how names elude one's mind."

Mr. Cobham looked up.

"You've been thinking about the case?" he asked.

"I've been thinking a lot about it," Jervis answered. "You challenged me to upset Arthur Stone's story. Lord P. was a beast and I'm delighted that Lady Prestwick was acquitted, but I think that I could have got my verdict if I'd been for the Crown. As I recall it, Teddy Beech led, with young Taverner as his junior. I shouldn't think that either of them has ever set foot north of the border, and that makes all the difference."

"Come on," Charles said. "Let's have the story."

Jervis House lit a cigarette.

"For a start," he began, "let's suppose that Lady Prestwick did rig up that booby trap, with the express intention of killing her husband.

"Now, according to Arthur Stone, if that, in fact, had been her idea, she was phenomenally lucky in pulling it off. It was this element of luck that led to her acquittal. But do you suppose that the verdict would have gone the same way if the Crown could have shown that luck hardly entered into the thing at all—that the chances were a hundred to one *in favour* of the pike striking his lordship on the head?"

Charles Meadows shook his head. "They'd have found her guilty."

"Just so. Now the defence's story was based on the assumption that Lord Prestwick was sitting at the head of the table eating his breakfast when Lady Prestwick came into the dining-room. But suppose he hadn't been sitting down at all. Suppose he had been standing in front of the fireplace, directly under the trophy, with his shoulders resting up against the mantelpiece. And suppose Lady Prestwick had known that that was where he would be when she opened the flower-room door."

Mr. Cobham looked puzzled. "But the fact that he had started his breakfast was never questioned," he said.

JERVIS HOUSE said: "I'm not questioning it now. I'm quite sure he had started his breakfast. But what does any self-respecting Scot start breakfast with?"

"Porridge," Charles said. And it was his turn to bang his fist down on the table.

"Just so," Jervis House observed. "He begins with porridge. And no Scottish laird that I ever stayed with ate his porridge sitting down. They eat their porridge, my dear Mr. Cobham, either standing staring out of the window at the rain or leaning up against the fireplace with their shoulders on the mantelpiece."

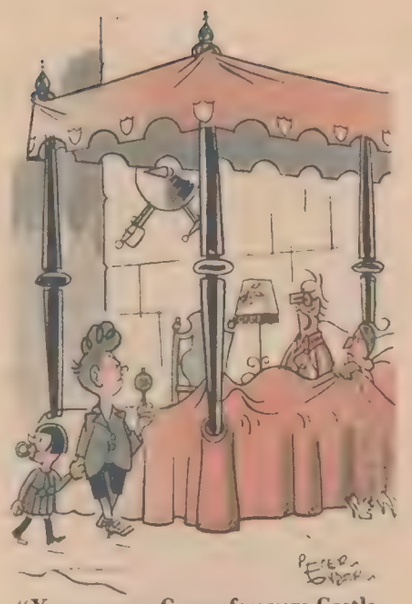
The familiar whirring sounded from the loudspeakers, followed by an announcement in rich American.

"I fancy," Jervis House remarked, "that meant that we've got to be on our way again."

The next lap of the flight seemed quite endless. For hours they flew in bright sunshine above a dense floor of clouds that looked like cotton-wool mountains. Sometimes the patient engines sounded strong and vigorous, and sometimes the noise they made seemed almost to die away into silence. Then the clouds cleared and they were flying over miles of pack ice that looked like crazy paving and which shaded imperceptibly into range after range of snow-capped ridges.

"Greenland's icy mountains," Mr. Cobham shouted.

The air hostess walked down the aisle



"Young man, Carnarfcarvem Castle was closed to the public at 8 p.m."

serving out pillows which the initiated placed on their knees.

Then came luncheon trays with an excellent meal which had been cooked in Montreal five days before, frozen, put aboard the aircraft, thawed and served up piping hot.

After lunch Charles slept, and when he woke up and looked out of the window the aircraft was swooping down over a great river gorge in a desolate country in which millions of little Christmas trees sprouted forlornly out of endless fields of snow.

As the sign about safety belts and cigarettes made its appearance he knew that they must be coming in to Goose Bay.

There were more flurries of snow, more red-faced boys in brightly coloured windcheaters and, inside the airport buildings, more red-hot radiators. But there was no more whisky, so they all three settled down at a small table and drank tomato juice.

"Satisfied?" Jervis House asked.

"I always knew she'd done it," Mr. Cobham said. "Nice actually to prove it though," he added wistfully.

"Prove it?" Jervis said. "Well, we should have to get hold of Lady Prestwick for that. A straight question and a straight answer. 'Was your husband eating porridge and leaning up against the mantelpiece when you opened the flower-room door?' And that's a question that I don't suppose we shall ever get the chance of asking. Or that we should care to ask if the chance came our way."

Mr. Cobham looked surprised. "Oh, I don't know," he said. "Coincidences do happen. And, after all, the woman was acquitted. She can't be tried again."

"I wonder what's happened to her," Meadows said. "Pretty frightful to go through life knowing that you've committed a murder and that plenty of other people know it, too."

Jervis House shrugged.

"Change your name?" he suggested. "Marry someone else? Emigrate? Take a job? She wouldn't accept a penny of Prestwick's money, that I do know. Bugg, the chauffeur, got a big legacy, but Lady P., entirely by her own choice, was back where she started. I'd like to meet her. But, despite Mr. Cobham here, I don't suppose I ever shall."

The little air hostess came into the restaurant and Mr. Cobham called out to her: "Hi-ya, Gorgeous, come and have a drop of the rich and ruby!"

She stopped, hesitated, and then came smiling across to their table.

"Enjoyed your flight?" she asked.

"It's not over yet," Jervis House said.

She looked at her wrist watch. "Only a minute or two more here," she said, "and then just a hop to Montreal."

"Anyhow," Mr. Cobham announced, "we've darned nearly solved the Prestwick case. If someone could tell our friend here whether Lord Prestwick was eating a plate of porridge when the pike fell on his head the whole thing would be buttoned up."

The air hostess got up.

"I must run," she said. "He was standing up under those old weapons eating his porridge—as he always did. But it was a bowl of porridge, you know, not a plate."

WHEN they touched down at Montreal the three men stayed behind in the cabin, allowing all the other passengers to get off ahead of them.

The air hostess came along with their coats and hats. Jervis House leant forward and laid a huge hand very gently on her arm.

"Lady Prestwick," he said, "if any of us had guessed for a single moment that you had had anything whatever to do with this wretched case we would rather have cut out our tongues than mention it. I do hope you will believe me when I say that."

"And there's the man," Mr. Cobham put in, "who doesn't believe in coincidences. Cheer up, Toots. How about you and me going places this evening?"

The girl's expression changed.

"I've had to be polite to you during the flight," she said. "That's part of my job. But if you think that I'd ever willingly come within a mile of you, Mr. Jack Bugg Cobham, you're very much mistaken."

She turned to Charles and Jervis.

"Please don't worry," she said. "I shouldn't have said what I did. But it's all over and done with now and it can't do anyone any harm. I'm not Lady Prestwick. Gosling's the name."

Make sure of your copy

TO be sure of getting your copy of JOHN BULL, *it is still necessary* to place a regular order with a newsagent or bookstall. In spite of the recent increase in paper supplies, copies are again restricted, and bookstalls cannot carry "spares."

Every endeavour will be made to supply extra copies for those wishing to become regular readers, *provided a definite order is placed*, but we cannot undertake to cover casual demand. So please tell your friends to . . .

order in advance

He keeps you on your toes

Actresses, tap-dancers, London-to-Brighton walkers all keep their feet in trim at the chiropodist's. And many a marriage has been improved by removing a housewife's corn

by DEREK WORDLEY

I STOPPED at the door bearing the professional card: "Mr. Blank, chiropodist, fully qualified." There were four letters after his name. Through the glass door I saw a man in a white coat.

Something about the man's face struck me as being familiar. I never forget a face and I would have sworn that the chiropodist in the white coat was the dustman to whom I had given a Christmas box last December. I walked away deep in thought.

A week later my corn was so painful that I had to seek treatment. But this time I went to a chiropodist recommended to me by a friend. This man made me foot-happy within a few days. He also confirmed that until recently the "fully-qualified" Mr. Blank had been a dustman.

This dustman became a chiropodist simply by taking a cheap correspondence course in chiropody which lasted only three weeks. At the end of those three weeks he "passed" his examination in his own home, with the textbook at his elbow.

For every genuinely qualified chiropodist in the country there are at least a dozen dangerous amateurs. The letters I noticed after the ex-dustman's name had been issued to him by the correspondence school. The diploma hanging on the wall of his consulting-room cost him a guinea and is a guarantee of precisely nothing.

A Cheap Set-up

Anybody may draft, sign and frame his own "Diploma in Chiropody," hang it on the wall and, having bought a few scalpels and other instruments, forthwith set up as a chiropodist. The well-recognized diplomas are those of the two main professional bodies, the Society of Chiropodists and the Joint Council of Chiropodists.

The letters F.Ch.S., M.Ch.S. or A.Ch.S stand for Fellow, Member or Associate respectively of the Society of Chiropodists. L.Ch., which means Licentiate in Chiropody, is used by members of the Joint Council of Chiropodists.

Like doctors, the men and women with these letters after their names are not allowed to advertise. For this reason, I have to use fictitious names. But the vast majority of chiropodists I have interviewed have one thing in common — they had wanted to become doctors and, being unable to afford the long training, they took the shorter two-year course in chiropody.

Douglas Robertson, the chiropodist who cured my corn, has his practice in the provincial town where I live. As one of the 3,000-odd members of the Society of Chiropodists, he is entitled to put on his door the weighty and all-important words, "Registered Medical Auxiliary."

This means that he has had his training approved by the Board of Registration of Medical Auxiliaries, which has its headquarters at the renowned British Medical Association's premises in Tavistock Square, London. It also means that his credentials are vouched for by this body.

Foot care is a must for London mannequin, Doreen Dawne. Chiropodists, like doctors, must stay anonymous

Before he earned a penny from his professional work, Robertson spent two years in training and 100 guineas in fees on a course in chiropody at one of the recognized hospital schools. There he received lectures from doctors on anatomy, physiology, pathology, dermatology, medicine and surgery.

The inclusion of such general subjects in his training enables him today to recognize in the condition of a patient's feet and legs symptoms of diseases not dealt with by himself. He advises such people to see their family doctor.

After Robertson had served a year as an assistant to an established chiropodist, he set up on his own. His equipment, including special chair, electric drills, scalpels and other instruments, cost him just under £300. He considers that every penny was well spent and has paid manifold dividends. Today he has a four-figure income, but he does not count the dividends in money alone.

One of his proudest boasts is that he frequently helps husband and wife to get on better. A foot-weary, middle-aged housewife, unable to walk far because of a painful corn, remarked to him after a few treatments: "Last Sunday I was able to walk four miles with my husband. It was marvellous! It's the first time I've done it since the early years of our marriage and my hubby was as pleased as a kid."

Corns, bunions, ingrowing toenails, plantar warts or verrucae, and certain skin diseases are common foot troubles dealt with by Robertson. Corns vary

from the simple thickening and hardening of the skin to chronic cases where the tissues become inflamed and break down or exude pus. Such septic conditions must receive attention from a chiropodist.

Robertson treats the ordinary corn by removing it with a scalpel and then by *removing the cause*. Unsuitable shoes may be the cause. But Robertson also looks for deformities and weaknesses in the foot, loss of muscle tone, and so on, to see how these can be corrected.

Doctors sometimes send to Robertson patients with inflamed or suppurating bunions. When all inflammation, discharge and swelling have been disposed of, a plaster cast of the affected part is made and from this a protective, plastic shield is moulded.

This, together with the prescribing of more suitable shoes, ensures the patient's comfort and prevents any recurrence of the trouble. If a patient is prepared to undergo operation to eliminate or correct a deformity he is referred to an orthopaedic surgeon.

Verrucae—or warts—are dealt with by applying chemicals which completely separate the growth from the normal tissue. The former is then excised and the site quickly healed.

Skin conditions such as athlete's foot are treated by means of ointments and paints containing various aniline dye products which destroy the bacteria causing the trouble.

He's Been Through It

There is quite a lot of the hero as well as of the doctor about Robertson. As a child he lay on his back for twelve years. When he was twenty he underwent a major operation which enabled him to get about. He still walks with a limp.

But the easing of his own troubles gave him a bond of sympathy with fellow-sufferers. He had missed a lot of schooling but he came through his two-year chiropody course brilliantly and today he is one of the most respected men in his profession.

He sees twenty patients a day, though this means working nearly a twelve-hour day. He reaches his consulting rooms at 8.30 a.m. to see his first patient, who may be his youngest, of three years, or his eldest, of ninety-six, at nine o'clock. He spends this half-hour in sharpening his instruments, filling his bottles and laying out other necessary equipment.

His is a busy practice and he does not see his last patient until 7 p.m. Then he does his own clerical work until 8.30 p.m. He feels that he thus maintains closer contact with his patients than if he were to employ a secretary, which he could easily afford to do.

He charges a flat-rate fee of 7s. 6d. for all but the most complicated treatments and reckons to give each patient half-an-hour's attention.

Robertson is booked up for weeks ahead. Occasionally he gets a request to visit an invalid to patch up his feet to enable him to walk around the sick room. To such people he devotes one of his leisure hours.

Among the people who come to his surgery are some who have not cut their toenails for twelve years and more. One woman took fright at the sight of his knives beside the chiropody chair and fled. He dragged her back into the consulting-room and today she is one of his most grateful patients.

A regular patient, an elderly fishmonger, came in limping one morning. Robertson asked him what the trouble was this time. The old man said he had slipped up in his shop in his gumboots. Robertson found wedged in one boot a jack-knife which was jabbing into the old fishmonger's leg.

Tom Johnston is another chiropodist who would have liked to have been a doctor. He conducts his practice in a London shoe shop. Being on the shop premises, he can go direct to one of the assistants or into the repair and alteration shop and explain just what his patient needs to make his feet comfortable.

Johnston can suggest that a certain part of the new shoe requires gusseting—that is slitting, expanding and patching—to ease pressure on a bunion. Or part of the sole or heel may need building up.

Johnston supports the scheme proposed by the Joint Council of Chiropodists to include chiropody in the National Health Service. The Council says the scheme would cost only £2,700,000 a year—or just over a shilling per head per year.

But a recent editorial of the independent *British Chiropody Journal*, which is edited by a Fellow of the Society of Chiropodists, stated that no Minister is likely to embark on a nation-wide, free-for-all chiropodial service, for which he would have to budget "for many millions of pounds."

Three In Five Footsore

The editorial says that this is apparent on the assumption that "three-fifths of the population would require some sort of chiropodial attention." Apart from financial considerations the number of chiropodists is inadequate for the task.

Basil Plumpton is a chiropodist in the W.1 district, just round the corner from Harley Street. His fee is a guinea a consultation or treatment. His equipment is the most modern obtainable.

Once a week Plumpton attends the foot clinic at a big London hospital. It is only at these clinics that chiropodial treatment is obtainable under the National Health Service.

Most of the cases have to be serious before they reach the clinic and then the specialist must see a score of patients in four hours. He does not like to give such rapid examination.

In his W.1 consulting-rooms, Plumpton has a chiropodial chair which cost nearly as much as does the complete equipment of a suburban chiropodist. The seat can be raised and lowered on a swivel, the back can be sloped, the foot-rest raised and lowered—and the arms will drop off.

Plumpton is licensed by the London County Council, which means that an inspector of the L.C.C. Special Treatment Establishment can walk unannounced into his consulting-rooms at any time. This is an anti-brothel measure which the council also operates in the case of masseurs.

Plumpton's patients include actresses, Mayfair residents and famous athletes. He has enabled a tap-dancer to go on tapping without any member of the public suspecting that the dancer has suffered painfully from his feet. A London-to-Brighton champion walker always pays Plumpton a visit before he steps out the fifty-odd miles.

Plumpton does not often supply supports to patients. Instead, he believes in removing the cause of the trouble. For instance, he removes ingrowing toenails and supplies the patient with plastic ones.

Wrong Way Round

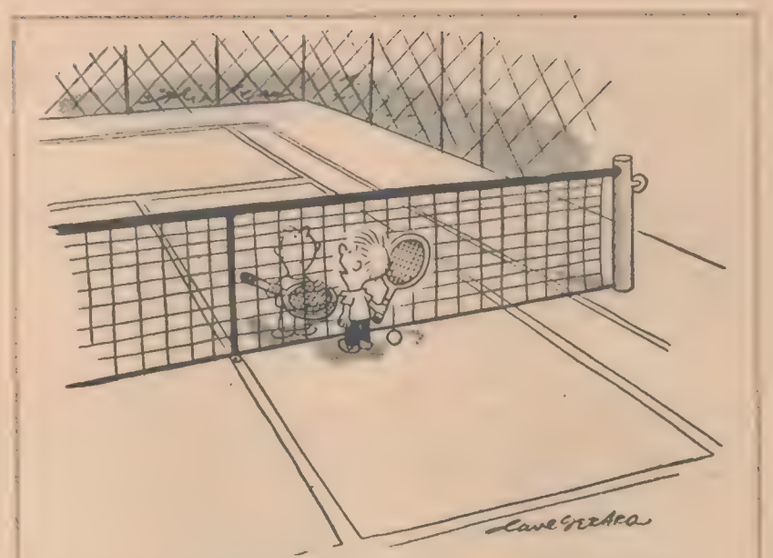
He did supply supports to one patient. A week later the man limped into his consulting-room, his face drawn in agony, and declared that he was now crippled. Plumpton gently eased off his shoes and found that he had been wearing the supports in the wrong shoes.

London has 500 members of the Society of Chiropodists. In the provinces they are fairly evenly distributed. Liverpool has about fifty, Manchester seventy or so, and smaller towns, such as Lincoln, five.

Many of these conscientiously-conducted practices are family concerns. Husbands and wives, brothers and sisters are family groups to be found practising from the same consulting-rooms in many towns of Britain.

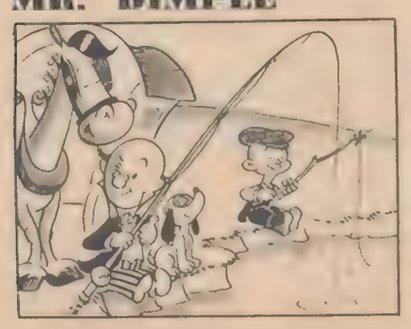
These people and their colleagues can be trusted to give feet a square deal. As for the quacks, the following toast was given by Lord Palmerston when he visited a famous Wigmore Street shoemaker a century ago and is now painted over the doorway of the London shop:

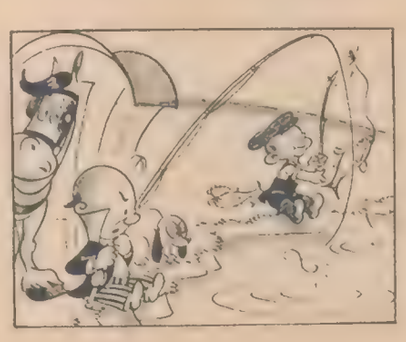
"Here's to our friends!
As to our foes,
May they have short shoes
And corns on their toes."

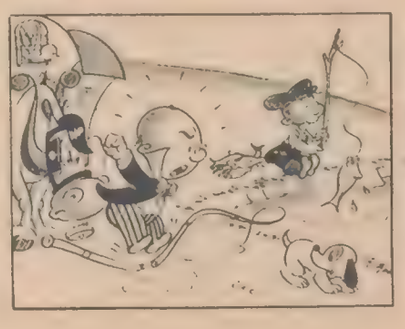


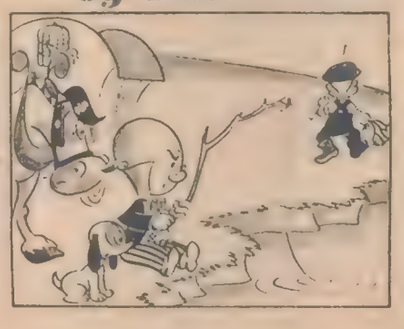
"Anyone who gets it over the net wins a point. Okay?"

MR. DIMPLE *by David Hand*









Why should Hall be honoured and he, Crander, overlooked? It was all so unjust, he told himself: bitterly unjust. And Hall would have to pay for it

PAT ON THE BACK

by DUDLEY HOYS

ILLUSTRATED BY ERIC LAWSON

FOR A WHILE old Gunson's cousin from the south divided his time between eating hotpot, studying the faces of the farmers at the long tables, and admiring the view through the window opposite. He could see the narrowing trough of the dale backed by the upthrust bulk of the fells. Under the evening sunlight most of the higher slopes were pale gold and green, though one peak, a ragged and splintered cone, glinted darkly with the nakedness of sheer rock. He wondered idly how Herdwick and Swaledale sheep could find any browsing there at all.

Old Gunson pointed his knife-blade in the direction of the chairman, a thin, grey-haired man with an intelligent face and a boyish expression.

"Yon's Hall. A good 'un, he is. A vet as well as a farmer."

"Really?"

"Ay. Got two vets farming here, we have." He chuckled a little. "Thought that would surprise tha." Again his knife-blade pointed, this time at a powerfully built man, his face red and solemn, his big brown eyes tinted with a purplish sheen. "Yon's Crander. Farms Low Ground. Him and Hall were at vet college together."

Both, he explained, combined farming with private research. Hall had done grand work on liver-fluke. He had been one of the first to use carbon-tetra-chloride. He was experimenting with a new method of dealing with braxy. Crander was spending every spare minute on the problem of foot-and-mouth.

"Chaps laike that," said old Gunson, "ought to get pat on back from Government. But they don't. Nay. They're the kind that prefer their work tae pulling strings."

"Always the way," said his cousin.

AT that moment the gavel thumped on the table, and Hall rose to propose the health of the guest of honour, Lord Milshaw, chairman of Imperial Fertilizers and director of a dozen other companies connected with agriculture. It was a pleasant speech, not particularly brilliant, but the applause it received was evidence of Hall's popularity.

Gunson's cousin watched the beaming faces. Crander's smile was as wide as anybody's, and yet there was no amusement in his eyes.

"Are Hall and Crander good friends?" he whispered.

"Oh, ay."

He could say no more, because the guest of honour was on his feet, bowing to a new round of applause. Everybody stared expectantly at this tall figure who was a mighty name in the industrial and political world. He had shaggy eyebrows, and a humorous, slightly cruel mouth.

"If I could have known beforehand the extent of the hospitality to be extended to me by the Whindale branch

"I want to show you something," said Crander. Puzzled, Hall went sauntering with him to the edge

of the National Farmers' Union, I should have omitted lunch. . . ."

For ten minutes he kept them amused, and ended by referring to their chairman.

"I've heard a lot about Mr. Hall. Not from him. Oh, no, he's much too modest. But more than one little bird has whispered in my ear about the remarkable research work he has been carrying on, with no thought of profit or reward, but from sheer devotion to agricultural science. That, gentlemen, I submit, is the highest form of service."

There was a thunderous clapping and stamping of feet. Gunson's cousin found himself glancing towards Crander. The man's hands were busy applauding, and his mouth was curved in an approving grin. But his eyes might have been large glass beads. Curious, thought Gunson's cousin; very curious.

There followed an interval, and Hall took the opportunity to introduce various farmers to Lord Milshaw. He beckoned to Crander, who came over with his slow, heavy gait.

"Here's a friend of mine," said Hall, "who more deserves your flattering remarks."

As the two shook hands, Milshaw asked: "Not another disciple of research?"

"Very much so," said Hall, and explained.

Those shaggy brows went up. "The community owes you a debt, Mr. Crander."

Crander shrugged, and said in a modest way: "It's the job itself that matters." Then he drifted off.

To Crander, people were fools, gullible fools, who judged a man not by his achievements but by his willingness to make himself affable. Look how they all made a fuss of Hall. The local farmers hailed him as a genius in their midst. Time and again a journalist on the neighbouring rag had written a column about his work.

Crander's lips twisted. Compared with the work he had done himself, Hall's was almost second-rate. And yet the man stole the thunder, such as it was. True, he was single-minded about his research. It mattered to him more than other people's praises. He had done more than some men who had been officially honoured. But there was something maddening about the way these dalesfolk pushed him into the limelight.

The guest of the evening left at half past ten. He was driving down to Liverpool. He mentioned to Hall that in the morning he was leaving for the States on an important mission. Gradually the others dispersed.

Hall's way to his farm lay across the high-pitched and desolate stretch of Ling Moor. He went out to his car and began to climb the long hill winding up between the great sweeps of bracken and heather and boulders.

As he approached the final tilt, where the sheer and stony wall of Black Ghyll dropped away a hundred feet on his right, he saw in his headlights a man standing by a stationary car. He recognized Lord Milshaw.

Milshaw said: "Been stuck here half an hour. Heaven knows what's wrong. You anything of a mechanic?"

"I'll have a shot."

Hall started to tinker. Milshaw was making quick, incisive comments. "Last place on earth to choose for a breakdown. Miles from anywhere. If I can't get going again soon, it'll be the very devil. May delay my departure for the States. Cars are mysteries to me. I can only drive 'em."

In a few minutes the engine had started purring sweetly. Milshaw was delighted.

"Grand work, Mr. Hall," he said, and shook his hand energetically. "I won't forget this. Good night."

The idea that a great captain of industrial science should have been baffled by

such an elementary problem amused Hall. It was the sort of story, he felt, that would tickle Crander. He must remember to tell him.

It so happened that in the morning he had a phone call from a man who farmed near Low Ground, asking if he could come and operate on a ram that had a tumour on the brain.

"All right," said Hall. "I'll be along in half an hour."

His way took him past Crander's laboratory, and through the window Hall saw Crander himself. He waved to him, and Crander came out.

Hall said: "Amusing incident last night." He told him about Milshaw and the breakdown.

Crander's lips smiled. "Too great a man to understand little things. He must have been grateful to you."

"He was. Apparently he was worried stiff he'd miss his jaunt to the States."

"In ancient days," said Crander, "kings made barons for little obligations of that sort."

Hall laughed. There was nothing else he could do. Crander's sense of humour had always tended towards the sardonic. They chatted for a few minutes, and then he left.

Crander went back to his laboratory. He lit a pipe and tried to grapple with himself. For months now he had known phases of dark depression, phases when there crept into him a craving to run away from his work, to run away from himself, to spend hours in the pubs, listening to the ordinary gossip of the farmers and shepherds, talking about the simple, uninspired things, free from introspection. What he needed, and resentfully refused to admit to himself, was peace of mind. Hall had it. Why?

In a vague and yet intensely goading fashion, Crander found the answer. And that made things worse. Both were giving their lives, completely and sincerely, to their jobs. They deserved recognition. If they never received it, Hall would remain content.

"But you're not quite big enough," a voice inside whispered, "and because of that you envy him. You're bitter."

During the next months he became more of a recluse. Slowly and powerfully the bitterness in him directed itself at an outward object of hatred. He thought about Hall until he loathed everything connected with him: his pleasant cheerfulness, his popularity, his temperament that could let him remain placid while the work of lesser men received public praise and recognition.

Then, towards the end of November, he first heard the rumour. He met a farmer whose grazing rights adjoined his own, and was told about a whisper going around that Hall's name would appear in the New Year Honours List.

"Glad to hear it," said Crander, with that stiff smile.

As he came walking down the stony track behind a string of ewes, the dogs patrolling both flanks, his eyes were glittering. Gossiping old women, these farmers. What did they know? A silly rumour, that's what it was. Somebody had started it by saying that Hall ought to get an award, and somebody else had garbled the remark into the yarn that he was going to receive an award. Yes; that's what it was.

The rumour stuck in his consciousness like some poisoned dart. With the passing of the days he found himself looking forward with a racked impatience to the bubble that would be pricked on New Year's Day. What rubbish they talked about the man, just because he drank with them, visited them, and generally acted as if he were a friend of everybody.

On the first of January he could scarcely wait for the delivery of the morning paper. He began to scan the longish list, turned over the page. The name suddenly caught his eye. The print had the effect of an audible, amused jeer.

For services to agriculture — John Kingsley Hall. The award was the C.B.E.

Crander's head jerked up from the paper. In a choked, snarling voice he was saying: "And what about mine? What about mine?"

He could not stay there at the table, with the breakfast things in front of him. Although a cold east wind was blowing, and the snow blanched the higher ridges, he went out as he was, walking mile after maddened mile across the fells.

When he got back, his desire to kill had hardened into determination. How and when he had no idea. But it would have to be. He could not go on like this. There would be no peace for him until he had done what he had got to do.

Within a week he received a printed note from the Whindale branch. To celebrate the honour awarded to and so thoroughly deserved by their chairman, a special dinner would be held at the Fox on January 29, when it was hoped all members would try to be present.

Crander held the note in front of him and nodded at it. Yes, he'd be present. Certainly he'd be present. He would leave a little before Hall, and drive up on to Ling Moor, and stop his car by the edge of Black Ghyll. When Hall came along he would get him to step out on some pretext and gradually draw him towards the edge. A quick push would be the end of him. Afterwards, he would start up Hall's car and send it after its owner. It would seem a reasonably likely accident in the darkness up there. Once Hall was gone, he decided—with the pitiful logic and calmness of the unbalanced—it would be a better world.

On the night of the dinner he felt a serene calmness. He kept up a flow of chat with his neighbours on either side, enjoyed the meal, stood up with the rest when the toast of congratulation was proposed, raised his glass to Hall, and smiled across at him. Even his hatred seemed to have changed itself into something on a higher plane, as though he were some celestial influence sent to carry out impartial destruction.

The first guests started to leave about eleven o'clock. He went out to his car. It was a dark night, but starry, and frost glimmered on the tops of the walls. A delicious sense of well-being descended upon him. He drove away up the long, winding hill to the great and hushed loneliness of the moor. Hall was the only one who lived this way. It was totally unlikely that any other car would pass.

Level with the deep drop of Black Ghyll, he stopped the car in the middle of the fairly narrow road and switched off the lights. Then he walked to the edge. The rock dropping below there was volcanic, rough, greyish-black, without a glimmer. Somewhere beneath in the thick, rich gloom the Ling Beck hissed and muttered and sobbed, beating itself against the clutter of boulders.

He heard a distant fox bark, and presently, a sheep blaring somewhere on the fells. Afterwards, it was almost unworldly in its splendid silence. Like him, it was waiting.

Then, almost imperceptibly, from afar there stole into the silence a faint purring. That would be Hall's car.

Crander smiled up at the sable, star-pricked sky. He felt like a god; a god of justice and vengeance. Light soaked a strip of the shrouded moorland to the south. It picked out his stationary car. Then Hall was stopping his own car and getting out.

Crander walked across to him.

"Hallo," said Hall. "Whatever are you doing up here?"

"I have some business with you," said Crander.

"Business! At this time of night, and up here!"

"Oh, yes. It's urgent. But it couldn't be done down at the Fox." Crander laid a hand on his arm. "I want to show you something." He took a few sauntering paces towards that edge, and the puzzled Hall went with him.

Crander said gently: "I want to show you where we've both been living."

"What on earth are you talking about?"

"In oblivion. But, of course, you've been lifted out of it. A great evening for you. To have honour paid to your work after all these years—you must be very glad."

They were less than a yard from the edge, and Crander was beginning to breathe quickly.

"Glad!" said Hall. His tone was oddly cynical. For an instant, it sounded as though Crander himself had spoken.

Crander looked at him sharply. "Aren't you?" he asked.

Hall said: "I've been taught a lesson. I tell you, Crander, a man who's faithful to his job shouldn't crave for a pat on the back. That means he's being unfaithful. Yes, I've been taught a lesson all right."

"What do you mean?" said Crander, with the simple bewilderment of a child.

"I had a letter this morning. From Milshaw. I must show it to you. One bit of it I shan't forget. He wrote: 'I want to congratulate you. Your name, as you will see, is in the Honours List. I didn't forget that helping hand you gave me with my car that night.'" Hall made a sound as if on the verge of sickness, and somehow changed it to a laugh. "For services to agriculture—my foot!"

No sound came from Crander. He stood there, quite still.

"Funny," said Hall, "isn't it? Really funny. It's the only way to look at it."

"I'm sorry, Hall." Crander patted his shoulder. "Never mind. After all, what the hell do these things matter to us?" He began to laugh shakily and walked away from the edge.

SIX SUMMERS by PAUL HOLT

Continuing his series on summers he will always remember, Paul Holt tells of the first time he saw Paris—after the five-year German occupation

Kisses and bullets in Paris

THE ANGRY LITTLE man was sitting by the roadside all by himself. A mica-covered mapboard was across his knees and his face was the colour of nutmeg from the dust in the air. You could see he was a French general from his tall, round hat and from the contemptuous way he regarded the scenery and the soldiery.

His name was General LeClerc and the reason why he was so angry was that his ultimate boss, General Eisenhower, had ordered him to liberate Paris from the *sales Boches* that very morning. The only detail Eisenhower's headquarters had mislaid in their planning was the troops with which to do the deed.

This often happens when politics intrude upon the business of warfare. The reason for the humiliation attending General LeClerc that wonderfully sunny August morning was the decision that Paris should be entered by French troops and by nobody else, and the only French troops were the Second French Armoured Division, who were then having a blood-thirsty time at the Falaise Gap eighty miles away.

The little general surveyed us poor war correspondents bitterly. "If I had known there were so many of you gentlemen, I would have formed you into a battalion and taken Paris with you this morning," he said. And he stood up and waved his stick at us and stalked away.

The Frenchmen turned up the next day. They were black with battle and fierce for the treat ahead. To show what kind of a treat they thought it was going to be they had discarded their American tin helmets and thrown open the turrets of their American tanks.

They roared along the road to Paris with their little scarlet spahi caps ajaunt on their heads. When they came to a village wineshop they stopped for a drink on the way to battle.

In A Ditch With A Bottle

That night we lay just outside the suburb of Sceaux. There was a little shelling from the Germans, not much; but the night was made more hideous by the sharp running of feet and the screams of some girl as they clipped her hair for going with the Germans. I remember lying in a ditch that night with a bottle of looted marc, a plum-skin liqueur potent enough to keep the dew away from my bones. The tanks slept along the road, like turtles with their eyes tight shut.

At dawn we moved towards the Porte d'Orleans. At the crossroads there was a fierce little captain with a revolver. He kept shouting: "No Americans! General's orders—no Americans!" I said I was British. He said it was just the same.

Finally an American colonel came up in a command car and he kindly said to the little captain: "Now, bud. If you're going to shoot this gentleman I'll have to shoot you." While he was having this parley I drove on, feeling fearsome and sick. Bob Lowe, that colonel's name was.

As we drove slowly along the broad cobbled road leading to the Porte there was the little general in his tall round hat, standing up in an armoured car and looking neither to right nor to left. Every hundred yards he would halt us, feeling out an ambush, and then the scene firmed for a second; peasants hurrying from their wine shops but everything else quite still and quiet, like a silent film in slow motion that halts at an odd antic. It was plain the Paris people weren't coming out to meet us.

It was 9.46 a.m. and the sun shone hotly when we entered Paris. The Raspail road leading to Montparnasse was empty — and then suddenly it wasn't. From nowhere there came thousands upon thousands of girls. They wore their best, bosomy summer print dresses and wedge-heeled shoes and they

Suddenly from nowhere thousands of girls swarmed over us

screamed and threw their flowers and swarmed all over us in ecstacy.

I had by now grown used to this fact of liberation and I knew that the only way to avoid strangulation, suffocation and giddiness is to go completely limp. Never kiss back; that's fatal.

The streets were roaring with humanity, all singing, and up ahead was the little general, still unsmiling, when we heard it—the crackle of sniping. Now the laughing girls were gone from the jeep, shrieking up the side streets, and the scene of *mardi gras* became a scene of panic. Now there were little men in ancient tin helmets running like ants.

The firing seemed to be coming from the roof of a block of flats and suddenly the unkind gent up there dropped a grenade smack in the middle of the column. I was out of the jeep head-first into the gutter in one smart parabola, but, however fast I moved, a girl was there before me. I know, because I fell on her, and very plump and accommodating she was.

A young man lying next to us was tugging at his trouser pocket, and he produced a vast revolver which flashed wickedly in the sunlight. "Please," I said, "*please* put that thing away if you value this young lady's safety." The young man said he was the young lady's fiancé and he was going to protect her.

"Do no such thing," I implored. "If you fire off that thing you will merely draw instant attention to her beauty." The young man saw my point. It was comfortable there in the gutter.

The next day there was a wonderful to-do. Apart from one or two burned-out tanks around the rue de Rivoli, the Germans seemed to have been discreet and modest about going away, and here was General Charles de Gaulle himself proposing to salute the undying flame at the Arc de Triomphe, ride down the Champs Elysées, pay compliments to the mayor at the Hotel de Ville and pray in Notre Dame. The wildest high spirits and chaos abounded.

First, the solemness of the Arc de Triomphe ceremony was somewhat diminished by the arrival of a young Scots B.B.C. engineer. In honour of the capital city of France he had donned the kilt and there he stood on the roof of a recording van, his ginger hair ablaze under the arch.

It is certainly true that a large number of Parisiennes present had never seen the kilt before, for their shrill comments of curiosity and approval did not cease during the ceremony.

Trundling in procession down the Champs Elysées, a girl jumped imperiously upon our jeep. Every Spahi we saw she would accost with: "Have you seen my husband, who was missing in North Africa in 1942, *mon vieux?*" Nobody had, naturally, and she began to cry, but did not cease to ask.

The scene in the square before the Hotel de Ville was absurdly anachronistic. The band of the Civic Guard, wearing horsehair plumes from brass helmets, vast moustachios and white buckskin breeches, played "Madelon," while the dusty tanks formed square.

We were all so happy, like people at a fête, when it happened again. Somebody saw somebody clambering over the roof of a hospital across the square and all the tanks opened up. It was deafening.

Another Brief Encounter

The girl I met in the gutter this time was not quite so plump and seemed rather fashionable to me. Shooting, by now, had become fairly general and we lay there together for a while, murmuring at each other in the din.

There was a machine gun going off in a bullying, nagging way about six feet from our heads when I felt my shoulder tapped and, looking up, saw the stage Frenchman of all time bending down towards me. He wore the grey Homburg, the spats, the dove waistcoat, and his face was creased and wise.

"Pardon, m'sieu. But I was wondering whether you would care for a glass of champagne?" he asked in excellent English.

At once we left the gutter.

The rhythm was repeated constantly during the days I spent in Paris before going back to the war.

I saw Mistinguett bravely wheeling her bicycle along the Boulevard des Italiens; I say bravely because scandal had hinted she was a collaborator and she was showing herself to her beloved Parisiens to ask them to say to her they did not believe it.

That same night a Maquis leader in Montmartre earnestly assured me he had himself attended the execution of Maurice Chevalier two days before.

They were days of mad contrast.

When a fight broke out on rue St. Honore, by the Madeleine, and shooting began once again, a most patrician young woman accosted me and suggested we should get in out of the shooting.

"Where are you taking me, madam?" I asked.

"To a dress show," she said simply.

Didn't Dare Wear Hats

We went to the Rothschild house, by the British Embassy, and there for the afternoon we watched elegant young women in their best summer dresses, while the firing went on in a desultory way outside the garden wall. Said one young woman to me: "We did not dare wear our hats for you this afternoon. We thought you might consider them too risky. . . ."

When I left Paris two days later, and reluctantly, the tanks of the Spahis were parked under the trees of the Champs Elysées. Around most of them family parties were picnicking. From the treads of a few there hung a silk stocking to dry.

The sun was hot and the war seemed far, far away, and I did not care to go back to it.

NEXT WEEK: The 1911 Coronation

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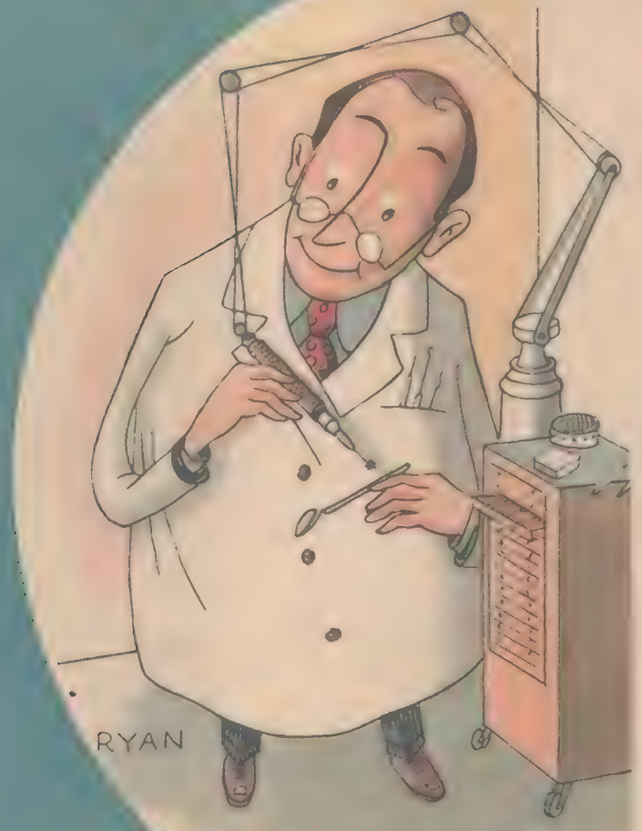

the Dentist

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NIGHT WITHOUT STARS

Continued from page 9

drawer. "If the pupil gets farther drawn up it will naturally restrict sight further and—it would be necessary to adapt your life accordingly."

"Can't operate again?"

"I should be afraid to with an eye in that condition. But why meet troubles before they come?"

I got up, feeling slightly sick, and looked for my hat. He passed it.

"Thanks," I said. "I'll keep you up to date."

HE'D evidently expected the thing to be rapid because when I went again in six months he showed no surprise. In the meantime I got about as usual.

I sold the family house in the end and found a smallish flat in Portland Place which suited a lot better. There were a few disadvantages, of course. I'd thought of pottering about with music again and it was a wrench to sell the piano, but I couldn't imagine myself doing much with it in the flat. Anyway, I was in the centre of things.

Spare evenings now were mostly spent at the club, and I began to make money at poker. I gave up golf, said it was a strain, and nobody suspected the truth. This slow loss of sight was quite different from the first go: all sorts of things helped: hearing, smell, touch.

I developed a low cunning, too. It became a sort of game, a matter of pride not to get caught out. I knew where everything was in the office, had my own table at the club. When at last it got so that I couldn't read small print I depended more than ever on Marigold, and kept other people out of my office while the first business of the day was gone through.

Then after a time it wasn't a game any more but deadly earnest. I thought I'd go on as long as I could. After that it was anybody's guess. I hated the thought of becoming helpless, an object of sympathy.

And I'd had one taste of complete darkness. I couldn't seem to see myself there again. But what was there to do about it?

One day I saw old Hampden and cousin Lewis, and told them I was giving up. I think by now they suspected a good bit because they didn't jib much but only argued pacifically over the use of the leisure I was going to take and the amount of the allowance they were to make me.

Cousin Lewis said he thought a sea trip would put me right, and old Hampden advised salmon fishing, but I left them saying I'd let them know where to send the money later on.

I didn't go to see Caroline and Hugh but dropped them a letter. It saved trouble. At that point it was hard to decide where to go, except that I'd a vague hankering to sit in the sun and let things slide.

Then suddenly one day I thought of the Wintertons.

The Wintertons had reached England with other refugees from the South of France in 1940. Because they knew my father they came into our office and I had been able to help them with credits and recommendations, and also to get a passage to America in the following year. When the war was over they went back to their villa in Beaulieu, near Monte Carlo, and since then had sent me three letters asking me out.

It seemed worth trying. I had memories of hot sun and mountains and bathing in the Mediterranean when I was a kid. Too many of these precious months had dribbled away in offices and the courts and among the fogs—real fogs

that had nothing to do with my eyesight. I wanted the sun.

I wrote them and got a wire back: "Delighted. Come and stay the winter."

WALTER WINTERTON was a Europeanized American of about fifty. Tall, graceful and grey-haired, he was supremely modest over most things but could never meet anyone fresh without telling them in the first ten minutes that he'd been to Eton and Cambridge and that an ancestor of his had been one of the first governors of Boston. Once you got past that you were all right.

Claire was an indefinite forty-five, half French and half something else, I never knew what. She was small and rather plump, had a tired caressing voice and liked her hair in vivid colours.

They met me at the station in an enormous car—I could just recognize their figures on the platform—drove me to their white Italian villa overlooking the beach, and entertained me like a king.

I stayed two months, basking in the winter sunshine, driving with them into Monte Carlo or Nice, talking endlessly and pleasantly on the veranda, sipping champagne cocktails, or taking up a corner at one of their sherry parties.

Claire's hair changed with the seasons, from a luscious mahogany to a glamorous primrose yellow. Walter talked about cars and Wall Street and winter sports and radiograms and the international situation. Claire talked about the ballet, shopping, food, her friends, the latest novels and, sometimes, to please her husband, cars. She said that cars were Walter's middle-aged vice. When he felt restless or discontented he took a new car the way other men took a mistress.

To a man with a mission they would have been supreme time-wasters, but just then it was ideal company for me. There was always something of interest happening, plenty of new society, no responsibilities or worries, and very little opportunity of being alone. I had my glasses changed into the fashionable pale rims and so looked exactly like everyone else.

But in the end I tired of it. The deterioration was going on all the time. The pupil was becoming more or less the same colour as the iris. That wasn't the way Halliday would have described it, but that was how it looked. My eyes are pretty dark, so the change was hardly noticeable, but I could tell that by the time the change was complete I should no longer be able to see. And there was nothing to do to stop it. The eye was clear now and had stopped getting inflamed, but the damage was done.

So I wasn't very good company inwardly, and after a time the constant entertaining and idle talk began to get on my nerves. I *wanted* to be alone. I wanted time to think and reason it all out and face up to it. Early in the New Year I told them I was leaving for Théoule, which is the other side of Cannes.

There were the usual regal protests, the motions gone through of sweeping my protests aside. But this time they wouldn't be swept.

"It's no good, both of you," I said. "I've booked my hotel. I must go."

"*Impossible,*" said Claire. "The hotels at Théoule are beyond belief. You'd be dead with ennui in a week."

"Then I must die. I can't sponge on you for the rest of my life."

They didn't reply. "I can't see you very clearly," I said, "but I believe you're both looking offended, as if I'd said something rather vulgar."

"So you have, darling," said Claire. "I can't help it, it's true. And I can't begin to thank you for the wonderful time you've given me for more than nine weeks. You've both been simply grand."

"One *gaffe* after another," said Claire.

"What will you live on?" asked Walter. "You can't get by on what's left of your sterling allowance."

"Thanks to the way you behave I've only succeeded in getting rid of about a quarter of it, so I shall be in the clear for some months."

"They ought to give you just as much as you want," said Claire. "Anyway, you can't possibly leave here. Please change the subject."

"I *want* to go," I had to say. "Even if only for a few weeks. D'you know what it is? I want to see how I get on by myself. I'm afraid of getting too dependent. . . . It's—psychological. That ought to appeal to you, Claire. You ought to understand."

She sighed. "But Théoule. No amenities. Not even a casino. . . ."

"I'll be back," I promised. "In time for Walter's new car."

Claire got up. "You're very difficult, Giles. I will go and see what Marie has for dinner."

* * *

So I went to Théoule. It's a good centre for exploring the Estérels, and I stayed at a little hotel-restaurant and got some satisfaction out of it because they never guessed more than that "monsieur was a little short-sighted." I bought a Victorian reading glass and with it was able to write letters and transact ordinary business.

But I didn't stay long. Claire had been right in one respect. The change was too drastic. After all the company and the chatter, and the driving about to concerts and the social amenities of the villa, an entirely solitary life in my condition was insupportable.

So in a few weeks I quietly moved to Nice and took an apartment off the Avenue de Verdun.

I let the Wintertons know, but by now they realized I had to work the thing out for myself and they couldn't help. There was one other man I knew in the district, John Chapel, who was attached to the British Consulate. We'd been to school together, and when he heard I was staying in the town he phoned, asking me over to meet his wife. But in the mood I was then in I made an excuse and the thing lapsed.

Nice is a nice town. It's got fun if you want fun; it's got the quaintness of the old streets and the quiet; there's industry and miles of shops, and fishing and the rest. I settled down, or tried to settle down, to live out the remaining months until I grew completely helpless, until I took to a white stick and a dog and people began to help me across roads and exchange pitying glances and be self-consciously kind.

I'VE never been able to count the number of shoe shops in the Avenue de la Victoire. Anyway I met her in one on the right-hand side going up from the sea. I'd gone in to buy a pair of walking shoes, having worn out three pairs during the winter.

A young, thin sort of girl served me. I didn't take much notice at first, as I was feeling pretty low, and anyway she was only a blur at two feet.

When people's faces and figures shimmer about in the shadows and only come into focus now, and then at close range, like fishes in an aquarium, one grows to have all sorts of new ways of summing them up. But today things were so bad with me I only remembered afterwards that I'd liked her voice from the start.

She brought me some shoes and I had to ask her what colour they were.

I did catch her surprised upward glance.

"Brown, m'sieu. A dark brown like the leather of books. They are made in our workshops and hand-stitched. They will wear better than most. That is not saying much, is it?" She gave a short laugh.

"The last pair I had were reinforced paper."

"From here?"

"No, I got them in Juan."

"Ah, that explains it exactly."

"Professional rivalry?" I said.

She laughed. "Really, at present

everything is bad. In a year or two it will be altogether different. The Germans took all the leather, as you will realize."

I tried them on.

"These are good English shoes you are wearing, m'sieu. Brogues don't you call them?

"Yes, I had them before the war. You know the English term, I see."

"Oh, it's a technical word. My English is very poor."

She went briskly away and came back with another clutter of boxes.

"These are of a lighter shade. But no, I think not, do you, m'sieu? And these are very strong. Possibly you will find them a little hard. Have you a fancy for the crêpe sole? Many people wear these now. Built into the heel, here, though you can't see it, is a metal rim. Very soon the top crêpe wears away. That is why we all go tap-tap."

"You don't go tap-tap," I said.

"Oh, no, in the shop it would be terrible. I wear sandals, as you see."

I stood up. "I'll try these."

A few steps across to the window and back. Anyway, I turned to come back and then suddenly didn't know which way to go. It was the first time in almost all this while that I'd gone wrong in my sense of direction. I had always been too canny and so busy cheating other people that I'd partly been able to cheat myself.

I took two or three steps and then stumbled over a footrest and went slap on the floor full-length.

WHEN I was a boy I'd fallen on the ice with much the same result. All the breath went out and nothing came in, until I found myself sitting up and the slim girl had got her arm round my shoulders and about eight other women were crowding round chattering like birds.

I got up and they found me a chair, and somebody brought sal volatile, and it was some time before we got back to the business of shoes.

When eventually there was just the one girl left as before I said: "I'll take these I have on. How much are they?"

"You would be very welcome to stay and rest a while longer if you want to."

"I'm all right, thank you. How much are the shoes?"

"Two thousand, eight hundred, fifty. Will m'sieu keep them on?"

"What?"

"Shall I pack the new shoes or the old?"

"The old."

She hesitated again, and then moved off. I got up to show them how fit I was. It was only a question of making a dignified exit.

She came back with the change and the parcel, and I thanked her for her kind attention.

"Very welcome," she said formally. And then, "I do hope you will be no worse for your fall."

"Thanks. I'll be getting along. Good day."

I went out.

It was near lunchtime, but I couldn't do anything about that. I went across to the café on the opposite corner and ordered a drink and sat listening to the sound of the traffic and the passing babble of people's voices. Overhead the wind was making a noise like a waterfall in the great plane trees. An old woman was going from table to table selling lottery tickets. When she came to my table I waved her away and just said "aveugle" and left it at that. No use disguising it any more. There was a wireless playing somewhere, jigging out a cheap dance tune. A man whistled it as he went out. The waiter came across and wiped over the vacated table; I heard the slur of his cloth and the scrape of the ashtray.

My ankle was beginning to ache.

Since leaving the Wintertons I'd been avoiding company, living within myself waiting for the crash, and now it had come—literally, only by chance, to symbolize the rest.

I drank my wine and wrestled with the devil who'd been conjured up in loneliness and was only waiting to pounce. I thought I wasn't real any longer. I might be a ghost, I thought, kicking around in the old haunts, just passing the time until some summons came from another world. All the warmth and the light and the noise was going on as usual but I'd no longer any share in it.

Somebody'd shut the glass door. Inside, the symphony—or maybe it was a cacophony—blared away, but I was out in the cold and the dark. Better to be really dead.

And suddenly it seemed to me that that *was* the way out. Till now it had been just a thought, a threat, a promise with a hint of bravado. Now it leered at me like a challenge to my own integrity and guts.

You can't complain at the bitterness of fate if all the time it's in your own hands to change it.

And it seemed to me just then that hesitation would be admitting you were beaten.

If you hesitated all the weak comforting thoughts would creep in and you'd never have the courage again. Now. Now. Get rid of yourself while the anger is there.

SOMEONE took the other seat at my table. The girl from the shoe shop said: "Forgive me. But you *are* ill."

I peered at her without gratitude. There was no virtue in anyone's interference now.

"Does it matter?" I said.

"I came out for lunch and saw you here."

"Don't let me make you late."

She didn't speak for a minute, seeming to weigh me up.

I said, with a sort of casual irritableness, to throw her off the scent: "Do these winds ever get on your nerves, or are you all immune?"

"We don't like them, of course."

"First you get the Mistral—and now it's something else."

"The Tramontane. It will drop tomorrow."

"Then I shall be better tomorrow." Much better.

She said: "Do you want to be left alone? If so, you have only to say."

"I think I do."

She waited. "You're blind, aren't you?"

I tapped on the table for the waiter but didn't answer. I was angry—not so much with her as at that weak part of myself which was trying to be glad of her interest.

"It's the war, isn't it? I know the signs so well. The war-injured are different from other people — afraid of showing themselves, afraid of sympathy. Well, I'll not give you sympathy if you don't want it. But . . . I thought you were a stranger in a foreign country. I thought it was the least I could do to come and see. . . ."

"M'sieu?"

"Bring this lady something to drink. What will you have, mad'moiselle?"

"Nothing, thank you."

"An apéritif for mad'moiselle."

He reeled off the usual list, and after a minute she chose one, I don't remember what it was. The waiter went away.

She said: "Have you been in France long?"

"Since November."

"You speak the language very fluently. But your accent is bad. What has made you so ill today?"

The waiter came with her apéritif.

"It's good of you to be interested, but I'm not ill. Only a little under the weather."

". . . I'm sorry. But I mustn't be sorry, must I? At least I'm sorry that you fell in our shop."

"Your carpet was commendably clean."

"It—upset us all in the shop very much. What are you going to do now?" she said.

"Have lunch, I should think. Perhaps you'll join me."

She moved her chair. "No, thank you. That was not what I meant at all."

"I thought it was."

"Well, it was not. Good day."

Quite suddenly, now I'd offended her, I felt sorry. And, having got its way, the resentment began to go. "Sit down. I thought you wanted to help me."

"I thought perhaps I could be of some use if you were ill."

"It would help me if you saved me from a solitary meal."

"That wasn't what I intended."

"Well, it's the only way you can be of assistance."

"If that is all you need. . . ."

Two women sat down at the next table and began arguing noisily.

I said: "Talking of accents, yours is not the local one."

"No. . . ."

"Do you come from Paris?"

"No, but I was at school there for a time."

"During the war?"

"Before."

I said: "I studied in Paris for a year just before the war. I was hoping to go back there sometime but it hasn't turned out that way."

"Perhaps you will yet."

I shook my head.

She seemed to think that out for a minute. "Did you go back to England when the war came?"

"No, the year before. Or, at least, a man with my name did. I doubt if I should recognize him now."

She said sombrely: "Should we any of us recognize ourselves."

"Ah. A fellow feeling. But you at least are not among the throw-outs, redundant war property within the meaning of the act."

She hesitated, seemed about to say something, stopped.

"I will lunch with you if you want me to, m'sieu."

"It's the least you can do, mad'moiselle."

"Madam," she said.

AS we went up the street to Biffi's, I felt a bit ashamed of being boorish. She'd had every excuse to drop the thing and walk out, and I didn't really want to end up with a nasty taste in my mouth. It's very hard to deceive a near-blind man, and I was sure she'd interfered only out of kindness of heart. You couldn't hold that against her. After all, I thought, forgetting my earlier feelings, there's not all that hurry.

Her voice was low-pitched and quick-speaking—you didn't need to see her to know what her wits were like—it was eager and faintly humorous, and often she'd end her sentences with an upward lilt which was like a laugh without quite being one. She sounded very young—most of the time.

Well, as she said, I didn't want her sympathy; but in spite of my worst intentions the meal was a change.

Her name was Alix Delaisse and she lived in an apartment off the rue St. François de Paule. She tried to get me to talk, as if knowing that was really the way to help.

She seemed irritated about the way I'd come to France to stay with friends and then chosen to go off alone just when they were most needed. What were friends and relations for if they couldn't be of use now?

"They could be of use if they could help me to see."

"But they *can* help you to see. That's just how. Companionship's a way of seeing, isn't it? Aren't we all blind if we haven't any friends?"

I listened to the sound of coffee being

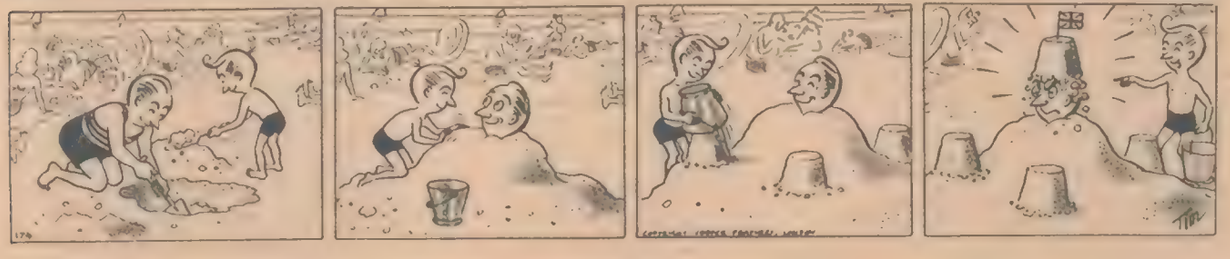
Continued on page 30

THIS WEEK'S COVER

AFTER all the hard work, the flower show is the high-spot of the gardener's year. W. E. Narraway, who painted this cover, is himself an enthusiastic gardener (and an accomplished wood carver) and lives in the country, near Dorking, Surrey. He is a Yorkshireman from the mining areas, and has been painting in oils since he was eight years of age.

OH, JOHNNY!

by TIM



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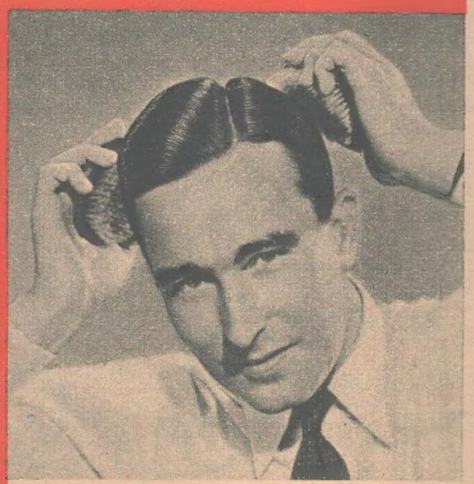

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A fine Fountain-pen accompanies each of the twenty chief cheques won with *Bullet* which was one of four or more on single coupon or plain-paper entry sheet.

RULES 1. First Prize for best *Bullet* received. Others in order of merit—the test is of cleverness, aptness and originality.

2. Editor undertakes that all *Bullets* received shall be accorded careful consideration by competent Adjudicators.

3. As entry-fee, enclose P.O. or stamps as indicated on coupon. Fee submitted will be taken to cover *Bullets* in coupon order—any sent in excess will be disqualified. Plain-paper entries are allowed. If using P.O. make payable to JOHN BULL, cross /& Co./, write name and address on back. Coupons must not be mutilated. Forces half-rate for *Bullets* and Crosswords for entry-fees not exceeding 2s. if coupons personally completed and Service rank indicated.

4. Entries accepted by post only and on condition that results of this week's Contest in *Bulletin* and *Gazette* dated Sept. 10, and in JOHN BULL dated Sept. 17, also Editor's decision in any matter of dispute, are accepted as final and legally binding. Odhams employees (and families) ineligible.

ADD 2, 3 or 4 WORDS to any of these "EXAMPLES"

To make a *Bullet*, add simply TWO, THREE or FOUR words of apt and original comment to any of the *Examples* on right. To use an incomplete *Example*, first complete it with any one word in place of dotted line—then make your *Bullet* as usual.

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3 BIG CHEQUES WON XWORD 641

WINNING WORDS. ACROSS: 1, Power. 2, Past. 6, List. 8, Dunce. 9, Minx. 10, Cakes. 12, Kit. 13, Shop. DOWN: 1, Parted. 3, Text. 4, Wins. 5, Mean. 7, Pen. 9, Melts. 11, Bun.

THREE £100 SHARERS (differing at one point only from competitors' Answers above): Miss M. Hammond, 149 Chanterlands Avenue, Hull; V. Tee, 41 Parham Road, Gosport, Hants; Mrs. M. Wilbourne, 9 Front, Mowbray Terrace, Choppington, Northumberland. In addition each winner receives a 20-lb. Food Parcel.

Awards value £25 for 1st Runners-up shared between 26 entrants (differing at two points only from Answers above). Useful "Signpost" Prizes awarded to all 2nd Runners-up.

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FIRST PRIZE, £500 plus Swiss Holiday for Two: L. A. Julian, 6 Broughton Grove, Nunsthorpe, Grimsby:

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THIRD PRIZE, £25: R. J. Lewry, 37 Castle Road, Salisbury: BUNCH OF FLOWERS—SAID EVERYTHING SO "BEAUTIFULLY."

OTHER AWARDS: £10: T. Hackett, 51 Sheringham Drive, Barking: MAN IN THE PUB—"ENCYCLOPAEDIA" MADE OF BLOTTING-PAPER! £10: C. G. Pollard, 4 Nesbitt Street, Sutton-in-Ashfield: HARD MASTER—GREENBACK—DON'T LEAN BACK! £5: Miss F. J. Foyle, 2 Bell Street, Romsey; ONE TOO MANY—ALAS, FUN TO MANY! £5: Miss M. L. Haynes, 50 Fullerton Road, Wandsworth, S.W.18: STAYING WITH US—WHATEVER THE "WEATHER." Ulster. £5: A. Shepherd, 5 Church Street, Dronfield, Nr. Sheffield: THANKS TO HER—"HOW'S NEXT PATIENT, NURSE?" £5: Mrs. M. Stapleton, 48 Great North Road, Welwyn Garden City: QUIET WEDDING—WE'RE QUIETLY DREADING, SONNY'S. £5: V. Tee, 41 Parham Road, Gosport: BUNCH OF ICICLES—FILLING. MY SWELTERING COMPARTMENT!

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THIS WAY TO WIN

FIRST complete Square in INK, giving your Answers to Clues on right. Then, if you wish to enter *one* extra Answer to any *one, two or three* Clues, give each such word in full in "Extra Answer" Form below Crossword Square.

Across Clues XWORD 646

1. Arguments are rather apt to take place over one
5. Sometimes seen on surface of lake
6. Girl who's well aware of her attractive appearance is sometimes difficult to get away from this
9. Occasionally quite a lot hangs on this of a famous painting
12. Dictators have been severely criticized for their handling of
13. May indicate relatively low speed
14. Weight of these is naturally considered by purchaser

Down Clues

1. People easily recognize his voice
2. What every housewife should have
3. Many of these are closed against ordinary people
4. There are people who live with greater austerity because of
7. One should be reasonably comfortable
8. The best teacher will find that children are fairly often this
10. You don't usually expect them to score heavily
11. Adjustments are necessary when this doesn't fit

WIN A CHEQUE AND 20-lb. FOOD PARCEL!

In adjudication, all Extra Answers will be read in combination with each other and with all Answers in your Square. Thus your completed Square with one extra Answer to *one* Clue will represent *two* full Squares (Entry-fee 6d.), Square with one extra Answer to *two* Clues will represent *four* full Squares (Entry-fee 1s.), and Square with one extra Answer to *three* Clues will represent *eight* full Squares (Entry-fee 2s.). Use ink, not pencil.

Single Square with 6d. P.O. or stamps covers dispatch to you of *Crossword Gazette* dated Sept. 3.

Winner—sender of most meritorious set of Answers received—decided by Adjudication Committee on basis of aptness and accuracy. Ties divide. Entrants limited to one prize per Contest and to entry requiring not more than 4s. entry-fee. Signature below is agreement to Rules.

1 B			T	T	2 L	E	■	3		■	4			
	■		O	D	I	N	■		O	R	E			
S	T	■	■	■		■	5	■	O	O	N			
6 S	E		■	T	7 C	■	■	R	O	T				
■	L	■	8	■	■	O	A	S	T	■				
9	A	T	E	■	■	■	■	■	■	10				
■	■	■	N	Y	C	11	T	A	L	A				
12	E	W	S	■	H	Y	■	■	O	C				
■	G	A	E	L	■	■	■	■	■	O	K			
13	O	G	646	14 S	■	E	E	T	S					

CLUE	EXTRA ANSWER	Total Fee
No.		6d.
No.		1s.
No.		2s.

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I enclose P.O. value.....

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646 Closing Postmark MON., AUG. 22

NIGHT WITHOUT STARS

Continued from page 28

poured. Has anyone ever done away with himself immediately after a good meal?

"I'm not being personal," I said, "but you're hardly the type one expects to find—where you are. Have you been selling 'brogues' for long?"

"Oh . . . nearly two years."

"And before that?"

"Before that was—the Occupation." She was not encouraging me to inquire into it.

"Does your husband work in Nice?"

"No." She paused. "It's time I went back to the shop."

"You're — young to be married."

"Oh, I'm not all that young."

"Would you do me the favour of moving to this chair? I can see nothing from there and I'd like to make sure."

After a minute she laughed in slight embarrassment, but she moved over.

"You *are* young. Not more than twenty-two."

"Twenty-three. That can be old. It depends where you have lived."

"And the colour of your hair?"

"Brown."

It was time to go.

"Did I deceive you coming into the shop; or did you think here's a silly fellow pretending he's like other men?"

"You deceived me."

"Until I fell over your footrest."

"I was afraid you had hurt yourself."

"I did hurt myself."

"But badly. You're so tall. That makes it worse."

The slight scent she was using wasn't exactly a cheap one. I guessed it came from the Schiaparelli or Chanel stable.

"So you advise me," I said, "to go back home."

"Now you're poking fun at me."

"No, I'm not."

"Well, yes. Or return to your friends here. Or make other friends."

"How can I make friends with people I can't see?"

"You should find it easy."

"Only with those who make it easy."

We got up to leave.

I said: "D'you think your husband would mind if I improved on this friendship?"

There was silence. "I don't think so," she said shortly.

"May I meet him sometime?"

". . . Perhaps."

"Will you dine with me tomorrow night?"

"Not tomorrow, I'm afraid."

"Saturday?"

"Thank you."

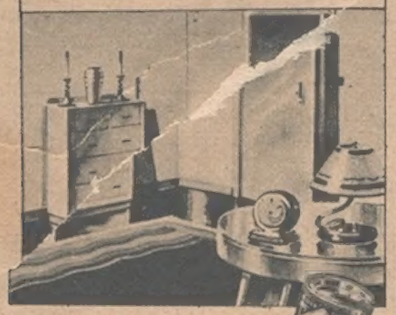
All right, I thought, that's settled. I'll stay alive till then.

To be continued next week

WRITE TO JOHN BULL ABOUT IT

Readers with personal problems (other than medical) can ask for advice from our team of experts. Queries should be sent to the John Bull Free Advice Service, 189 High Holborn, London, W.C.1. Enclose a stamped envelope for reply, please.

Lacquer your home a lovely colour



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ALICE IN POSTERLAND

Drawing by GILROY

Catch as catch can't

"He runs with all his might," panted the Lion, "but I run with might and mane, you know."

"My Goodness," Alice exclaimed, "you *are* fast."

"Your Goodness — *puff* — my dear young lady — *puff* — has nothing to do with it," said the Lion. "It's the Keeper's Goodness I'm after — the Goodness in his Guinness. I haven't the strength to catch him till I've had a Guinness."

"But you can't have the Guinness till you catch him," Alice objected.

"I know," said the Lion. "That's what makes me such a *wild* animal."

G.E.1440.C